



THE SIXTH WORK.



# THE SIXTH WORK;

OR,

The Charity of Moral Effort.

BY

S. MEREDITH.

“as in prison, and ye came unto me.”—MATT. xxv., 36.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE purpose of the writer of this little book is to induce consideration for the case of those whom Christians too commonly exclude from their sympathy.

In an attempt which is being made to assist women who are struggling back to honesty and virtuous living, many obstacles are encountered, arising from ignorance of the condition of criminals, and neglect of their claim on the moral members of society. The publication of a short account of some movements connected with them is, therefore, believed to be much needed.

S. MEREDITH.

Bayswater, 1866.



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# THE SIXTH WORK.

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## CHAPTER I.

### Popular Interest in Prisons.

The Prison Force..Unnatural Substitution..The Prison Compass  
..Absence of a National Sentiment..The Three Cases..Infanticide..Difficulty of Co-operation..Evidence of Statistics..The Thought Movement..Mrs. Fry..John Howard..Moral Effort Neglected.

It is not clear to many persons that they have anything to do with prisons ; and as mere places of detention, this is, probably, true. But it is otherwise with the principle involved in them. This comes within the province of most of us, for the prison is the embodiment of a certain moral sense, with which we all have to do, both in ourselves and others. The strength or weakness of this moral sense, its growth or decay, is

matter of deep concern to us all. We are all generally acquainted with its working, though, perhaps, some of us do not give much attention to the action by which it is promoted, nor watch with any particular care the agencies that restrain and corrupt it. The prison subject cannot be wholly uninteresting to any man; and it simplifies itself to every comprehension, when it is reflected that there is represented in the prison, the final attempt to produce that sentiment which our mothers try to develop, from the earliest dawn of reason; and which, cultivated by the training of Christianity, forms that rightness of conduct which, as a community, we maintain by example, explain by precept, and insist on by force.

The prison is this force; and society has a right to use it, after it has tried the other primary means of procuring morality. Unfortunately we, in some cases, have to use the prison force first; because that which, in the natural order, should have preceded it has been omitted. It is not uncommon to see, in the case of a wrong-doing child, a severe exertion of physical control on the part of a parent, who has not attempted the moral culture of his child; and the Government has, hitherto, had no resource but the prison,

to supply this training of which its people are too frequently deprived. It is impossible to think of the thousands who inhabit our prisons, without being painfully reminded of the lack of the sense of parental responsibility, in a large class in the community, which their circumstances evince. There are fathers and mothers who do their work badly; and their deficiency is ill supplied by any other agency.

Combined poverty, ignorance, and vice, almost destroy parental morals, in the ranks to which we refer; and, for the offspring of such depraved persons, we must have prisons. Our innumerable charity schools are found to do little to make up to this section of the population the loss it suffers. The special teaching which, in the first years of life, subdues the brute element, either is not effectually given in them, or they do not reach the class where the deficiency is. This is specially unfortunate; for the women of the ranks to which criminals chiefly belong, have lost the mother-art with which the sex is endowed, for the express purpose of training the animal passions in their earliest, softest, and tenderest time, before the strength of manhood makes their evil tendencies such formidable monsters, that the subjection of

them can only be attempted by overwhelming physical opposition.

The stone walls, iron bars, and ponderous locks and keys of the great places in which we incarcerate our offenders tell a solemn tale. They speak of an unnatural substitution of matter for mind, of body for soul, of animal for moral power; and announce a void which no artificial contrivance can fill. While it exists prisons must multiply; and because of it we must construct them, and fill them: while mothers train not, and schools are ineffective, there must be prisons. In the present chapter, however, we do not touch the questions that these circumstances suggest.

There are 190 gaols and prisons in England, containing about four-and-twenty thousand persons; and, besides these, Bridewells, lock-ups, and station-houses, in every town and village, hold fresh supplies, ready to enter and fill the vacant places which, from time to time, occur within their walls. The prisons are never empty. Inmates keep flowing through them in a steady current, which circulates with a regularity that can be calculated with tidal accuracy. Prison-work is reduced to a mechanical process; and, when it is carried out, the result is abso-

lutely nothing! The whole labour is profitless; we are just where we began. There is no impression made on the criminal mass; it is as great as ever—as hard as ever—as impenetrable as ever. There it is—a glaring streak through the body of society, forming one of the strata in that human concrete. We stare at it in wonder; not now, indeed, as to how it got there, intruding between layers of materials so different from its elements; for we but too well know its origin, and the cause of its maintenance. But we gaze at it with the most lively speculation, as to whether its particles will, or not, amalgamate with the neighbouring sections, or assimilate itself with their virtuous and moral members; and, whether, and how, these people, so isolated, and so debased, shall be induced to become, at least, moral, if they do not rise to the higher state, and become the subjects of quickening grace, and attain to eternal life.

Examination of the whole of this case leads us to the conclusion, that the condition of the criminal class depends on prison work; much more than may be thought, perhaps nearly all that can be done for it, must be done in the prison. Although schools for the young take precedence in point of time, prisons are before them in



importance. The moral teaching of children cannot be too strongly urged ; and this is the business of the schools. But the moral reformation of the mature is still more powerfully to be insisted on ; and the prison is the place where it is to be attempted. One of these agencies is for the children, the other is for the parents. It is not unusual to hear people solemnly give up the latter, and resolve to leave them to their fate, while they devote all effort to the former. But this is neither political economy, social science, nor Christianity. The progenitor is of the utmost consequence to the race ; however important the school is, the prison is no less so. Within the compass of the latter, the whole want may possibly be supplied ; and while the earlier training effort has, necessarily, a limit to its powers, there are capabilities in imprisonment which render it peculiarly applicable to the extremity of the case.

There is not enough known about this instrumentality. Most men rest contentedly under the impression that, because there is a department of Government specially organized for the purpose of conducting the penal machinery of the State, and for administering the jurisprudence connected with it, they are exempt from all further



concern on the subject. They readily admit that difficult questions are involved in its action. They easily believe that it is a very defective branch of the legislature ; and they systematically pass over the consideration of it. They do not feel competent to enter on it, so they avoid it, and go on with as little notice of it as possible. This line of conduct has become a national habit ; and, hence, the national action in this case is rather an indication of the absence of a national sentiment on the subject, than its expression. Public opinion about the matter is unsettled and vague. For example, ignorance and uncertainty are displayed in the debates on capital punishment, which, from time to time, break the popular silence on criminal law. The right and wrong of this one item alone puzzles all parties. The fixed standard of appeal in this, as in all other points relating to the treatment of crime, is unknown or disregarded ; and few persons feel able to take either side of the argument.

So advanced a community should not remain in this state of doubt and perplexity. The light of truth is brightening ; Christianity emblazons itself everywhere. Diffusion of knowledge is the rule of the day ; but with the

vast increase of information, clearness of apprehension does not keep pace. There is ever the difficulty of discerning specious error from truth ; and in no case is it more trying, than in that of the prison question. The real, pure doctrines of Christianity have been so mixed up with spurious wisdom, that the task of separating the one from the other requires spiritual understanding, gifted to perceive, and to trace, the Divine mind, beneath the superincumbency of human imaginations. The word prison conveys to the majority of persons something perfectly foreign to anything Christian. Justice, and, perhaps, mercy rise before their thoughts, at the sound ; and a compound conception is the result, which serves only to confuse their notions of the nature and utility of such an institution.

There has been, latterly, great awakening of interest about the moral state of our community. Points intimately connected with it, are continually under investigation ; and this renders it easier now to draw forward the case of the criminal, and to bring the popular mind to the discussion of its difficulties than formerly. Poor relief, and sanitary measures, engage the serious attention of society ; and the condition of the criminal should natu-

rally come next under consideration. The three cases cannot be severed; they are associated indissolubly by ties of cause and effect; and any attempt to treat them disjointedly must be unsuccessful. A considerable amount of action is undertaken in each of the other instances; and every day it increases in zeal and vigour. The intelligent performance of such Christian work, as the classes sunk in poverty, sickness, and crime demand, is the most important movement of our time. On it depends our social progress; and especially on the efficiency of that which concerns the latter. In truth, our material prosperity, without corresponding moral elevation, would but inaugurate national decay. The virtue of its people alone advances a country to honour.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is a disgrace to any people.”

It is a circumstance of which we are compelled to take cognizance, that our social moral tone is not so high as our religious profession requires. The judicial calendar does not consist with the character of our piety; and while we boast of increased spiritual light, we have to mourn, not only that offences against the law of Christ do not diminish in number nor nature, but that there

is not sufficient protest against this condition, nor enough effort to amend it. Without referring to statistics, any one at all familiar with social affairs, must be aware that there is a great deal of evil not only unsubdued among us, but almost tolerated, and subjected to very little Christian effort to suppress. Vice and crime fill a large space in the history of the day, the pages of which, published so actively by the press, spread over the land a record of shame, and carry the distressing communication far and wide.

No one can hear unmoved of the growth of the terrible sin of infanticide which is degrading us. This alone stamps us as having far departed from the standard of purity. There is a deep and awful significance in this crime. It is not a detached act; alas, it is but one of a train of deeds tending to strike at the root of life temporal and eternal. There is in the unmotherly hand which commits it a horrible force, derived from an influence de-humanizing in its venom. All that is holy and true in our nature is being poisoned at its source. The generations of evil succeed each other: "Lust, when it conceiveth, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The suicide of our race is involved in the child-murder that abounds.

The concern of women in the progress of crime, naturally centres itself in this point of guilt; and the facts connected with it, daily coming to light, should move them in the deepest seat of their sensations. That this age of knowledge and instruction should be marked by the most hideous form of wickedness, is humiliating in the most distressing degree; and that, at this time, the prophetic question: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" should be answered in the affirmative, is enough to shake the faith of the stoutest believer, in the efficacy of the kind of Gospel teaching, which is given in such abundance, throughout the length and breadth of the land. Bad as the act of the wretched female is, who first stifles her motherhood, and then her offspring, it is not the worst feature of this unhappy case.

The wise and practical authoress of *Ragged Homes, and How to Mend Them*, said to the writer, in reference to this matter:

"I do not, now, only say to mothers, 'Train your daughters,' but I say, 'Train your sons.'"

These words conveyed much, concerning the mischief in process, its cause and cure. No action can

directly reach it, nor interfere specially with it, for the surroundings of it are on all sides dangerous; and we are not in a state to approach the stronghold, until we have mastered the outposts of this iniquity.\*

Every report of the efforts to benefit the poor and the sick is refreshing. It is gratifying to know that, day by day, the number of those who work in their behalf is being added to. The workhouse door is opened to a larger charity, which is carrying a better system of management into its sad enclosure. Science is throwing light on disease, and doing its best to lessen mortality. It remains for us to hear, that these two are in co-operation with an improved scheme of judicial administration, in order to entertain any solid expectation of moral good, from all the Christian work in process. Without a

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\* It is to be remarked, that the objection to the infliction of capital punishment on these offenders increases. They escape in most instances, by being arraigned on the lighter charge of concealment of birth; and, when convicted of the graver crime, they procure commutation of sentence on various grounds. This inconsistency is attributable to one of two causes; either there is a strong popular feeling against the punishment of death, or there is not a deep sense of the enormity of this special offence.

distinct action for the amelioration of criminals, there can be no well-ascertained progress. There may be speculation on the moral state of the country, but it will not have a basis on which to ground its calculations; and, without this, they are worthless and misleading. There is, however, some effort for the suppression of crime going on. The centralization of thought on the subject is very important, for with fixed purposes, and determined co-operation, much service might be rendered to the community.

Many very pious people hear with great anxiety of the abounding sin of the times; and are at a loss to know what their duty is in the case. They are willing to give their best endeavours to the matter; but cannot discover where to begin to work, whom to join, and what to do. This is to be deplored, for every good man and woman may work in this cause; and the field of labour is at each person's door. Any willing heart and hand may perform some act in it. Every one who lives a moral life raises the moral pitch of society; and every one who checks an immoral deed in his neighbour, sows a precious seed, the bloom of which will shed a sweetness on the dark desert of crime.



But there is difficulty in forming any regular agency or association, for the purpose of doing this work ; and in arriving at a point where combinations may be formed to carry it out. In order to unite for practical interference with crime, a common principle must be accepted, as the ground of the movement ; and this must be well and thoroughly understood, by those who undertake it. It is vitally important to begin the ventilation of ideas connected with the subject ; and it is specially wise to inquire into the nature and practice of all the present modes of attempting the work.

Penal law, and religion, have been the only operations brought to bear on the criminal class ; and both have been doing much to meet the evil. The result of their work cannot be easily seen, for it cannot be gathered in any tangible form, in order to submit it to examination. The figures to be derived from the judicial reports of the last few years, which appear to prove that the country is at a stand-still in regard to crime, and neither getting better nor worse, are not to be relied on. The *primâ facie* evidence to be deduced from these statistics must be received with large reservation ; not even an approximate conclusion



can be drawn from them, as at present collected. The difficulty of contrasting the number of offenders committed to prison with the main body of crime is great. The machinery in use for the purpose of tracing guilt is in so many known instances inefficacious that it defies calculation, in how many unknown ones it may be so also ! Therefore, we may reasonably decide, that the proportion of variation between the limits of committals, and the area of crime is beyond our ken ; and we may cease to draw inferences, from such data as we at present possess. We cannot avoid the force of the evidence to be derived from the daily state of morality that we are called on to observe ; and it lies as a counterbalance to the statement of official returns.

When we say, in general terms, that religion, as well as judicial action, has failed to produce the desired results, we merely assert that it has not effected the moral reformation, at which it is the duty of the community to aim. Restoration to orderly, honest, sober living, is the design society has in view, in the treatment of the criminals. The higher object of interest, their eternal happiness, is not the sole purpose of its interference. Its executive power is exercised, primarily,

for the general good, the protection of its innocent members from the ill conduct of the vicious; and for the prevention of repeated offences, on the part of the same person. This is the whole undertaking of the State in the matter; and it uses for its purpose the operations to which we have referred. One of these, the religious teaching which it has employed, has been very liberally supplied. For some years past, there can be no blame attached to the Government, on the score of inattention to the spiritual concerns of the culprits, who come under its control. Evangelical instruction has been largely given in prisons; and the freest possible access has been afforded, to the ministry of the Gospel.

The labours of prison reformers effected this; and, in so doing, they accomplished a great deal. There was a time when darkness, grosser than Egyptian, was on the prisons of this country; and the ray of light which could alone penetrate it was Christian love; especially that higher form of it, which contemplates the salvation of man's soul.

From time to time, great thinkers had been pondering on penal administration. There was, at one period

a simultaneous mental movement in various parts of Europe on the subject. Thought, with such a weighty theme to carry, moved slowly; and deductions from its evolutions were still more delayed. There is scarcely yet an acknowledged and acted-on principle of prison discipline,\* notwithstanding the amount of attention the matter has received.

Montesquieu, Beccaria, and Voltaire, on the Continent, Eden, Mabley, and Paley, in England, have tried to come to some conclusion, as to the fundamental error in the common method of treating crime, but without success. While Addison, Steele, and Defoe were gracing English literature with their refined writings, Howard and Blackstone were labouring to condense legal and benevolent thought on the prison subject; and they have marked the period in which they lived, as the crisis of modern intelligence on the penal question. They gave a fresh start to the work of moral reformation, but the impulse has left slight trace on the face of society. Bentham had made a previous effort of the same sort, with as little result; and when Buxton's reports developed the

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\* J. S. Mill. *Political Economy*, p. 528.

smallness of their achievements, the public seemed to have so little hope left, of any benefit from the wisdom of the sages, that, even the most irreligious sections of it, welcomed the pious Elizabeth Fry to the mission.

Mrs. Fry's simple faith in the all-sufficiency of Christian love, was a sublime stimulus to the exhausted energies of prison investigators. They dropped their theories before her plain, practical Christianity; and, from having been ardent metaphysical disputants, they lapsed into admiring votaries of her spiritual creed. The hold which Mrs. Fry obtained over the public mind is very remarkable. She came in good time. It had been found out that there were barbarities in the prisons, unworthy of a Christian nation; and the country was ripe for her revelation of their details. These were truly horrible. Nothing but desire to save souls, could possibly have sent any one into the loathsome places, in which prisoners were confined. It was the most revolting labour conceivable, to approach the wretched creatures in their dens, at the time that Mrs. Fry began her prison-visiting; and it would have been useless to philosophize on the general prison scheme, while the subjects of it were perishing under its pressure.

Mrs. Fry bent all her energies to the relief of the present distress. Her life and works give no note of time, nor thought, spent in devising systems of prison discipline, to prevent the recurrence of misery, such as that which awakened the national sympathy. Theoretically, the penal institution underwent no change through Mrs. Fry's agency. She not only left it as she found it, but she set up an action in the midst of it, on the non-interference principle, which has restrained thought on the subject, in a large circle of the best people.

The religious public, from the days of Mrs. Fry until now, has maintained strict neutrality in the case of prisons. Those members of it who have persevered in the prison-visiting which she introduced, have been most systematic in their avoidance of the least comment on the executive. They have acted on the plan of entire separation of objects and sentiments from those of the legislature; and they have carried on their work exclusively in connection with the Church. It has been as marked a severance, as if there had been no compatibility between the parties; and it has had a most extraordinary amount of respect from the State, which has, in the most ample

manner, guaranteed religious work free course, and protected it in every exercise of its power.

Under this impartial rule, there can be no complaint that governmental interference marred its efficacy. There has been none. What evangelical labour proposed has never been hindered; and no impediment has arisen to its work, from the circumstances of the prisoners, for it has actually governed these. Prison regulations were framed to meet the views of the religious teachers; and, in the day when every enactment that had been tried had failed, the authorities cheerfully accepted the help of the evangelical body, in the organization of religious habits, in the gaols of the kingdom. The whole country was unanimous in this; and every prison in the land has, in its daily routine, evidences of the plans for Gospel influence, which were arranged under the auspices of Elizabeth Fry.

Howard's purpose evidently was to act on the criminals with a view to their becoming good and useful members of society; and his work, which also manifested a regard for their eternal destiny, chiefly contemplated their life in this world. His God-fearing, honest efforts were devoted to the purifying of the penal administration,

which he found in a very corrupt state; and they had some effect in the matter, although the success of his principles, in regard to the repression of crime, were not secured. In fact, they were not understood. His great philanthropy, and the great physical improvements that he effected, were highly esteemed. Public indignation was excited by his exposure of prison interiors, and the executive underwent a good deal of salutary cleansing, in pursuance of his motion.

An element of benevolence was introduced into this department of the legislature; and ex-officio, honorary, members were added to the managers of prisons. Men qualified by social position, and personal character, were appointed to assist in carrying out discipline in the gaols. An unpaid agency arose, which largely supplemented the State in this service; and which may be considered to have been the result of Howard's energy. Magistrates, clergymen, and others, freely devoted themselves to the work; but the projects of the great reformer concerning the prisoner were not appreciated by his generation; nor did the next perceive their drift. Some attention was given to prison discipline, but so little progress was made towards the diminution of



offenders, that the labourers in this cause were disheartened, and the case was left almost for lost.

People had utterly failed to comprehend John Howard's remedial propositions, simply because they had a moral, as well as a spiritual aspect. Moral teaching was not recognised as a Christian element. The truly pious eschewed it, as beneath the elevated nature of their teaching ; and, outside their circle, there prevailed a great, and general, false impression regarding the value of moral effort. Howard should be better understood now, than he was in his lifetime ; the light, of which his theories were the dawn, is now shining round us.

Elizabeth Fry's movement and his contrast ; and the difference between them is now, at length, clearly understood. Hers was a purely religious attempt ; and, unlike Howard's, it encountered no obstacle, outside the prison walls. The criminal and the non-criminal were alike, to the views of those who contemplated only the spiritual condition of men, as susceptible of any improvement ; and this was the doctrine of her day. While she looked beyond the whole scheme of earthly existence, and serenely set her gaze on the heavenly life, the popular



mind fully comprehended her idea. Her plan was instantly seized on; for it corresponded with the whole course of popular religious instruction. Christianity was commonly held to have no concern with worldly things; and to ignore preparation for them.

Prisoners bound for eternity were easy to address; and the interval of time, through which they should pass, before reaching the new state of existence, was not difficult to pass over mentally. The temporal conduct of those criminals, who would not pursue their spiritual concerns, was not deemed worth special direction; and their pious friends wrestled with them in eloquent exhortation, and for them in earnest prayer; but the effort to induce them to become moral, was not made the subject of Christian energy.



## CHAPTER II.

### Evangelical Work in Prisons.

Thirty years' Experience..Plenty of Chaplains and Lay Teachers  
..Great Religious Zeal..Testimony of Witnesses..Lincolnshire  
Tom..Disappointment..Re-convictions..Imposition..Conver-  
sions..Despairing Tone..Excessive Obduracy..No Place of  
Repentance..The Story of A. B...Consistency..C. D.'s Case..  
Her own account of her Conversion..Sense of Guilt..Outside  
the Pale.

TIME has fully tested the effect on the general morality of the country of the prison-visiting, to which we have alluded in the foregoing chapter. There has been thirty years' experience of it. A generation has been submitted to its action, in the most unreserved manner. For the last fifteen years, the principle has had the fairest possible trial in the Government prisons. It met the full approval of the late Sir Joshua Jebb; and he gave Mrs. Fry's scheme of prison-visiting every facility for being carried into effect. During the whole time that has elapsed since her mission, the county and borough gaols have also submitted their

prisoners with perfect freedom, to those who endeavoured to carry out her views. Notwithstanding the provision of a full and efficient staff of chaplains, lay teachers have been invited, and have been supported in their efforts for the good of prisoners. There has been a great deal of prison-visiting in operation all over the country. Nearly every prison has its staff of voluntary agents for this work ; and much patient, earnest love for souls is manifested by those labourers, who, in conjunction with the regular prison ministry,\* are worthy of the highest honour.

It may be fairly calculated, that the criminal class of the country, as it flows through the prisons, has had the full benefit of all the service, which these good people can render. When the peculiarity of their work is duly considered, it must be felt that they give a great lesson in charity, which should not be lost to the Christian world. Their singular perseverance and indomitable zeal ought to be recorded in some form. This it would be very difficult to do ; but a few statements of facts about

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\* The Gaol Chaplains' Act, of 1823, and the recent Prison Ministers' Act, provide most amply for the religious instruction of prisoners of all denominations.

it may be found interesting and instructive. The result of inquiry diligently pursued, opportunities for personal observation eagerly made use of, and direct testimony freely given, is very discouraging. Taking all the reports into consideration, that can be gathered from all quarters, it is plain to be seen that there has been little gained beside disappointment.

Spiritual conversions in prison are extremely rare. Chaplains and visitors unanimously state that they are few, so few as to warrant very little hope of even the best cases. Every witness asserts that imposition is the most noticeable feature of religious profession in prison. Protestations of penitence, tears, sighs, Scripture quotations, and promises of amendment are all peculiarly delusive.

“One in twenty means well.”

“One in a hundred may be sincere in the desire to be saved.”

“Often, after the deepest apparent contrition, they are re-convicted soon after their discharge from prison.”

“The greatest possible expression of concern for the soul would not now induce me, without further evidence, to believe in the conversion of the speaker, I have

so often seen it followed by increasingly gross crime. I must see thorough amendment of conduct before I can trust, and I am seldom gratified by the sight." These are the depositions of many witnesses.

Almost without exception, every prison-visitor speaks of failure. Not one boasts of success. In male prisons there may be more perceptible effect than in the women's; but very little evidence of any considerable work has ever been offered in either case. There has been some; and one of the most remarkable instances is to be found in last year's *Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons*, pages 132, 133, 134. We give the narrative, extracted from the Chaplain's Report:—

One man of this Testing House party, Register 8,615, who has, since his conviction, distinguished himself by application to mental studies as well as to manual labour, some time ago spoke to me so thankfully of the blessing another prisoner of the same party had been to him, in relation to spiritual things, that I requested Register 5,851 to give me some account of the manner and nature of what appears, indeed, the genuine conversion of a sinner to God. In reply, he said, "In September last, I was employed at a grindstone with my poor fellow-prisoner in grinding tools for cleaning anchors. A short opportunity was given, a few words were fervently and rapidly spoken by me, an unworthy recipient of free sovereign mercy, and the work was done. I was led by the Spirit of Christ to

speak of the exceeding riches of His grace to poor lost sinners, and of my own personal experience of the same, in all my troubles. While I was speaking, it pleased the Lord so to touch the heart of my poor companion in tribulation, that he could not refrain from tears; feeling then, as he often now says, the heavy weight of his past sins, together with a strong sense of the attracting love of Christ, which led him to deplore, confess, and forsake his sins, and from that time to give evidence to all around of a *marked change in his life.*"

The spirit and character of the subject of this conversion so distinguish him from others, of whom I could write most hopefully, that I am induced to give some further account of him as related to me by another prisoner of the same party.

"When convicted, Lincolnshire Tom was over 40 years of age. He could barely spell through a chapter of the New Testament. It is just within the province of truth to say *he could write*, but he knew nothing of arithmetic. The eldest, in the large family of a labourer, he had no early opportunities; and lengthened courses of intemperance, had prevented him from supplying a deficiency, which was felt as often as a division of the contract price, for work he had taken with a party of mates, had to be made. When, however, he got into Wakefield Prison he resolved to employ his solitude in self-improvement. With what assistance he could get, he attacked the humbler branches of learning, much in the same way as he would remove a mound of earth, and bit by bit he removed the obstructions, and stored up, in a workmanlike manner, what materials he required, or thought would be useful. Morning, noon, and night, all spare time was given to study. Whilst at exercise, the officers might observe his lips and face in-

voluntarily working, and think that he was fretting and muttering to himself. No. He was refreshing and entertaining himself by repeating 'sotto voce' his multiplication table, tables of aliquot parts of pounds, shillings, and pence, of weights and measures, and such like. Since he has been at Portsmouth the same principles have guided him, the same industry has distinguished him. In addition to great improvement in reading and writing, he has gone through one manual of arithmetic, with a useful recollection of what he has learned, and is now progressing in another of a higher class; he has made himself acquainted with the rudiments of land-surveying, and made such inroads on the mechanical studies and parts of music, that he hopes by-and-by to be useful to some clergyman of a village, as the leader of his choir. Better than all, I believe that his heart is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that the same devotedness which distinguishes him in his daily labour, at which he stands the head of his party, will also mark his Christian course."

The infirmary is visited daily by both Chaplain and Scripture Reader for religious exercises. Last September, Register 8,908 was a patient there for some time. It was the practice of this man to do in the infirmary wards, in the presence of others, as he did alone when in his cell: he kneeled at his bedside morning and evening in prayer to his God. One prisoner in particular, Register 8,764, besought him to give some reason for thus provoking sarcasm and inviting ridicule. He thought a Christian man should have as strong as well as a good reason for a course of conduct, which might induce derision if not blasphemy. After some thought 8,908 gave his reason in the following lines:—



“ Shall the rude Turk or ruder Arab kneel  
In crowded ship, bazaar, or thoroughfare,  
When loud the cries of shrill Muezzin peal  
Through Eastern climes, inviting *all* to prayer  
Who hold Mahomet’s name in love and fear ;  
And I, who name a worthier, holier name,  
Shall I refuse the knee, and silence bear,  
Or think to cast on scoffing mates the blame  
Of stifled prayer, the Spirit grieved, and secret shame ?

“ No ! though I in the inner chamber find  
A fitter, calmer scene for exercise  
In prayer, I, in the chamber of the mind,  
May always hold converse with the all-wise,  
All-seeing God ! And they who truly prize  
The privilege, will with Him oft commune,  
Though scoffers gaze, and Satan fiercely tries  
To tempt, to dare, to drive, and importune  
To madly think, both place and time, inopportune.

“ Nor let me e’er refuse the bended knee  
At morn or eve. To me, give Daniel’s frame  
Of mind, O Lord ! A spirit bold, and free  
From fear of favourites, or of Monarch’s blame !  
Alike indifferent to disgrace or fame  
Derived from worldly men. And fearing more  
The NOT confessing Christ’s most holy name  
Than ALL it can inflict, remove, present, restore !

“ Whether it be in ward of hospital  
Or hold of convict-ship ; many or few



The eyes that gaze in wonder ; some or all  
In scorn and unbelief ; though they dare strew  
The air with oaths, and taint the winds, that blow  
Them from the shore, with vice : still I will kneel,  
As I was wont before, though midst this crew !  
And thank my God with undiminished zeal,  
For all the debt I owe, and all the love I feel."

With regard to female prisoners, inquiry elicits desponding replies. One lady, a contemporary of Mrs. Fry, who has steadily kept her ground, and wrought through the whole of those years under the most painful discouragements, says :—

"She thinks that she could point to a few real conversions, but that the overwhelming majority of the women, with whom she comes in contact, remain unaffected, and become neither moral nor religious."

This lady sees the criminals in various stages of their career, for she visits in several prisons, and she seems to have the least hope of those who have attained the last degree of penal treatment, and have become what are called "convicts." These women have passed, probably, each one, numerous periods of incarceration in different places ; and in all these they have been subjected to the same style of spiritual teaching, which meets

them in their final stage. The despairing tone adopted by all who attempt this work is remarkable. Intercourse with prison-visitors convinces that it is almost a forlorn hope, undertaken without much expectation of seeing its success. But, in spite of this, they work on; they grope along in anxiety and weariness; they are bewildered, deceived, and frustrated, still they work! If the work were not of faith it would be of folly; but it is of faith; and such faith is stronger than the principles of all the prison reformers that ever breathed. Their devices either stand or fall as the passing day decides; but this faith has its foundation in eternity; and it remains unshaken by experience, and unmoved against all contradiction.

If we exaggerate the difficulty of spiritual work in prisons, we shall be thankful for correction. We invite comment on our statement that it is extraordinarily so; and that a gaol conversion is a peculiar thing—to be spoken of with reservation and caution. The announcement of even a spark of hope, in any special case, is usually doled out slowly, and encumbered with apologies for the credulity which ventures on even the gentlest form of assertion. It would be highly desirable

to prove that this is unnecessary; but, alas! facts are stubborn things; and these are so constantly arising to establish the case, that any attempt at denying them is useless. Stern officials contrast the terrible sheet of "re-convictions," with the most glowing expressions of hopeful feelings; and they hear of the deepest penitence with cool assurance of its evanescence. Then comes sad proof of their foresight; and sorer sense of cheater. The culprit re-appears, again, and again, and again, and repeats the same hollow vows, sheds the same false tears, renews the rôle, and acts, and re-acts the farce. At length, no one is deceived; it is a phantasmagoria; people get accustomed to it, and look on, without even the sensation of wonder. No one believes that anything will ever come of these emotional manifestations, but the prison-visitors; and though they do not pretend to explain the phenomena of their apparently fruitless service, they rest in the trust, that its utility will, one day, be made visible.

As an instance of the excessive obduracy of criminal women, we may adduce the case of a woman now only in middle-age, who has been six-and-thirty times in prison, and who, in several of her imprisonments, mani-

fested signs of sorrow for sin. At times she was even vehement in her remorse, and succeeded, during one of her incarcerations, in deceiving a most experienced visitor, to whom her return to crime has added another to a long list of disappointments. The number of imprisonments suffered in this case is, unfortunately, not uncommon; and another example can be given, which has not the recommendation of novelty either, though it differs slightly from the foregoing.

There is a woman now undergoing a long period of penal servitude, for the second time, who has passed nearly all her life in going in and out of gaols; and who had begun the criminal career, when Mrs. Fry used to visit at Newgate. This convict frequently refers to the circumstances of those early days, when ladies first began to visit in the prisons; and she gives a lively sketch of the effects of their work on various characters, from personal observation. An aged prison-visitor was recognised by this culprit, as one of the earliest persons who had endeavoured to awaken a sense of sin in her heart; and in an interview that took place between them, the lady expressed no surprise at the history of hardness and

guilt revealed to her, and the prisoner neither repentance nor shame.

There is much that is painful and obscure in this subject of prison work ; and those who decline to consider it in any way but as matter of faith, may well be pardoned. Unfortunately, however, it is a matter of practice too, and the practice forces itself on our attention, whether we will or not. There must be something done for prisoners, which will affect their present life, and influence the whole state of the community. Doubtless it is delightful to contemplate the glorious future—the time to come—when we shall know all that is now mystery ; when it shall be told us why the criminal who seems to seek a place of repentance, “ carefully, and with tears,” does not find it ; and, so far as we can see, becomes daily worse, instead of better ; but the awful question, why all that is done for this class of sinners is so unavailing, presses on us now and here ; and must in some measure be answered.

The individual cases in which spiritual renewal is certain, and is manifested in a total change of living and temper, are intensely interesting, in their personal aspect, but they raise no hope of improved general morals. One

of these is that of a woman whose story is not a little remarkable. She, and a few others, are well known to several besides the writer, and the circumstances of their cases can be authenticated.

A. B., a domestic servant, was convicted of robbing her master of plate. It was her second conviction. Her first crime had been sheep-stealing, and she had suffered an imprisonment of two years for it. The second sentence was, therefore, increased in severity. It was for fourteen years. During her first imprisonment, she had not earned a good character ; and in the second, she was not, at first, well conducted. After a time, a great change was apparent in her : deep attention marked her manner in the Sunday-school class, and she showed much anxiety about her eternal interests.

A lady who visited in the prison had many conversations with her about spiritual things, and discovered that there was a real sense of sin in her heart. There was great sorrow, which became confirmed repentance. She gave full proof of the reality of this in her actions ; the officers of the prison were quite convinced of her sincerity ; and her life evidenced the truth of her profes-

sions so clearly, that all who knew her became interested in her. She was a clever, intelligent woman, and made herself useful and obliging to the matrons ; she won such favour, that intercession was made with the Government on her behalf ; and a remission of seven years of her sentence was granted. This extraordinary mercy was obtained, on the faith of the strong testimony borne respecting her. It was strictly inquired into ; and, in every particular, the statement of her improvement was confirmed. In a letter written by her to a lady visitor, she says : “ Oh, that I did not value your kind visits in former times, and I should not have come to this end ; but I thank the Lord, that He checked me then, and turned me into the prison as a means of bringing me to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who has said, ‘ He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.’ ” In another letter she alludes to her imprisonment in similar terms :—

“ Thanks be to God, I am able to inform you, that I am growing happier every day and every night, trusting in Jesus as the Saviour of my soul, and above all things thankful for my imprisonment, because I was on the brink of everlasting woe.”



After her release, she writes to the visitor again, and tells her of a situation in which she was placed, in these terms :—

“ It put me about to serve a strange Mrs. in a strange country, but, glory be to God, and to the Lamb for ever, that it was not a strange God that I had to serve, but that ever-living God that freed me from the cold cell and the fast locks of the prison : thanks be to God I had been in the prison, it was the means of bringing me back from the broad way that leads to destruction. You were the first, I will ever remember, to instruct me. I was very sorry not to see you when I was in —— ; I am now going to —— ; ” and here she names her employer, then the rector of a country parish, and now the dean of a large diocese. She lived eleven years in his service ; and then got an appointment in a public institution, where her conduct and efficiency procured her one of the highest testimonials that could be penned. She has occupied positions of trust and importance during the last five years, with much credit ; and her friends are satisfied that she is a devout and earnest servant of God.

Her consistency is a most valuable fact, for, at the time of her conversion, even those who most anxiously pressed



her case on the consideration of the Government, trembled lest time might prove her one of the many deceivers. Many more particulars could be given of her history, but that it would give her pain to be brought before public notice. She expresses a strong and natural dislike, that it should be known to strangers that she has been in prison ; but to those who are acquainted with the circumstances of her career, she has no objection to mention the providences and loving-kindnesses that fell to her lot during the time of her degradation. Gratitude for these to her heavenly Father, and to the friends raised up for her, is her striking characteristic. As an instance of it, we may record, that she lately expressed great anxiety to see a lady, who had once called to see her in prison, many years ago, and gave her a little book, of which she says, " I have it yet, and it is called 'The Mind of Jesus.' "

C. D., another prisoner, is as remarkable an instance as A. B., of the singular effect occasionally granted to a few words spoken in faith, in a prison. She was led into sin at thirteen years of age, by the son of the master of the parish school at which she attended. Up to her twentieth year, she was a very wicked girl, living with the worst associates. About this time, she and another girl went into an

officer's quarters, in — Barracks, and stole jewellery and money. They were taken up for the robbery, on the clearest evidence; both denied their guilt, C. D. in the most violent manner. One day, soon after they were sent to prison, C. D.'s companion was detected swallowing paper; and, on being given an emetic, she threw up three five-pound notes, which were identified as those lost by the officer. On hearing this, C. D. renewed her protestations of innocence, and swore again, and again, in the most solemn manner, that she knew nothing about the matter; and she excited herself into the most violent fury against her accusers.

The rage of the class of women to which she belonged, is a most awful sight; and she gave as bad an exhibition of it as the most experienced prison officer ever saw. On the Sunday following this scene, the lady visitor, who knew nothing whatever of the occurrence we have detailed, addressed a group, of which C. D. was one, on the words, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

There was no evidence that any of her hearers were particularly affected by the teaching. In the course of the week, however, this lady received a message from the prison requesting her to visit C. D., whose state was most

distressing. She had changed from her former wickedness and hardness, into a condition of terrible affliction for her crime ; and had confessed the whole affair. She had delivered the rest of the missing money to the matron ; and was in inconsolable sorrow. The visitor saw her daily ; and sat for hours listening to her misery and remorse, repeating to her God's promises, and offers of mercy. A whole month passed before she had any sense of pardon. It came at last ; and the calm and peace of her mind was followed by a complete reformation in her temper and habits. She has fulfilled her sentence creditably ; and is now in respectable employment. A letter which was received from her is highly characteristic of her excitable disposition ; and gives an account of her conversion in her own words :—

“MY DEAR ——.—This is from a hell deserving sinner, rescued by the out-stretched arms of Jesus my Saviour, the sinners friend and guide. Oh, the Saviour to me is more than I can tell : His mercy to me is so great that I wonder that I am on the land of the living, it is amazing to me, a sinner destined to hell, doomed for ever and ever to the devil. I was a faithful servant, I served twenty-two years and three months, I delited in his

ways and works. I walked with him, and talked with him, and he deceived and blinded me so far, that I thought him the god of my soul, yes, he was my god and friend in this world. I don't think I can say anything else, for you know that when the Saviour's word was spoke to me, I refused to listen to it, nor could I hear the Saviour's voice when the enemy of my soul was holden me firm, so as I should not leave him, until the Saviour Jesus cast a look of pity on me, he saw me on the verge of hell, he new that into it I should go, it was then that the battle commenced for me, the devil fought hard for me, but my Saviour fought still harder, consinse did alarm me, all hopes failed me, hell was my doom, I new no other place for me. I did not know that my Saviour was so near me. Ah, He strove with the devil for me, He knocked hard at the door of my hart, he awakened me from the sleep of death, to see my sins and to acknowledge my guilt, witch freed me from the due rewards of my guilt on earth and the punishment I should undergo, but when the Saviour of my soul drew me to the foot of the cross, I beheld his love and felt his grace, he freed me here, and for ever.

That precious warning of Jesus that you over and over told me of, 'be sure your sins will find you out,' it did by God's mercy find me, and brought me to that loving Jesus, the shepherd of my soul to live, to love, and with him die. My dear ——, it is now that I can thank my Saviour for providing sutch a friend as you to speak to me of that loving Saviour; his words by you to me, where as bread cast on the waters, they are found, and precious are they to me; they are The goys and the comfort of my life, they are my sleeping peace, and wakeing goys of the morning of life, they sustain me trough the days and lighten me trough the night. Oh the 30 of Juley, the words of the earthly King david, When he was in distress for the remision of his sins, and the sanctification of hart, the Lord his Saviour had mercy on him, with him I praid for forgiveness, I took the same words that he did, the first and the 9, 10, 11th verses of the 51. psalms, have mercy on me, Oh God blot out my trangressions for thy great mercys sake, oh God. I have to thank the Lord and you this night, rember me to the Lord in your prayers. I cant say no more for the present, but the God of my salvation

help and strengten you to bring more to the knowledge of the Saviour Jesus Christ to him be glory for ever more, amen.

only Jesus, only Jesus,  
for this my Saviour, he has shed his blood for the,  
long by sin a captive taken.

Jesus love has set the free

only Jesus can thy great redeemer bee

from a sinner saved by grace." \*

These cases are only offered as average samples of prison conversions. Others might be given, but they are all very similar; and these serve to illustrate the fact, that, though rare, they are not impossibilities. They generally manifest the peculiarities of the class in which they occur, and exhibit the excessively demonstrative dispositions common to criminals. In connection with their extraordinary amount of protestation and profession, it is well to remember the words of the Lord: "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." A few of these

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\* These extracts are printed from the original letters without alteration.


instances, occasionally occur, to cheer the weary spirit of the labourers ; and small as the number is, it is a Divine recognition of the work which warrants perseverance in it.

No doubt it does the will of the Sovereign Lord of souls, but it certainly fails to accomplish the moral purpose of the "powers that be." This system of prison-visiting exercises no influence on the general suppression of crime ; it is not calculated to do so. While it gathers out a handful of brands from the burning, the great mass is left to disgrace the land, offending God and man. To the sorrowful, depressed, and tried spirit of the prison-visitor, this seems to be a sad necessity. Is there really no help, no hope, for the case ? Is submission to the deplorable circumstance the only resource ? Is there no suggestion in the minds of thoughtful Christians, who interest themselves in prisoners, for the relief of the miserable crowd, the unregenerate multitude ? The state of those who are not touched by the Holy Spirit is surely not beyond their province ; they must not leave it outside the pale of Christian work, nor must they consider those who endeavour to induce criminals to become moral, as workers of a different order from themselves. There can be no line drawn



between these and the spiritual labourers, on this ground. Such separation into sections is not consistent with the indivisible nature of Christian work. It would curtail its field of action in a most unchristian manner; and narrow the sympathy of that charity, which should know no bound. The principle on which some spiritually-minded Christians decline to endeavour to excite moral feelings; and refuse to make an effort to encourage outward conformity to a common standard of right, while the heart is unconverted, leaves much work undone. There is some ignorance and prejudice about this matter, which retard the progress of true Christian work. A little consideration of the subject may conduce to more intelligent action; and promote the cause of religion, as well as advance temporal social interests.





## CHAPTER III.

### The Charity of Moral Efforts.

The Service of Christ..Tabular Statement of Christian Social Duty..Classification of Work and Workers..Unconsciousness..Thoroughness of Action..Six Forms of Service..Representative Terms..The Gospel Poor-Law..The Order of Divine Providence..Bodily Wants—Moral Trial..God's Time to Deprive..The First Three Deeds...Morality Impossible to Counterfeit..The Value of the Schedule..The Accuracy of Christ's Summary..Vague Distribution..Love's Labour Lost.."Good Work" and "Bad Work"..Private Christian Sentiment made Public Duty..State Provision for the Poor..Pauperdom..Almsgiving..Inter-changing Classes..Degeneration..None Excluded..Figurative Language..Bishop Ridley's Letter..Resisted Work.

THE service of Christ cannot be limited to the work of promoting spiritual conversion. He has not so restricted it. In the catalogue which He has given us of the acts that He will hereafter recognise as services rendered to Him, by His true followers, it is remarkable that there is no mention made of evangelical work. When He addresses the collected body of His professing people, in the judgment of Christendom, He omits specific notice of the labours of the ministry; and He only adjudicates on the case of ordinary charitable duty. He divides this

duty into six parts; and every part of it directly refers to earthly life. The list, as it stands, in Matthew's Gospel, chapter xxv., from the 34th to the 46th verse, may be condensed, and arranged in the following order :—

No. 1.

“ FEEDING THE HUNGRY.”

No. 2.

“ REFRESHING THE THIRSTY.”

No. 3.

“ CLOTHING THE NAKED.”

No. 4.

“ SHELTERING THE STRANGER.”

No. 5.

“ RELIEVING THE SICK.”

No. 6.

“ VISITING THE PRISONER.”

We shall greatly mistake Christ's meaning, and the value of His suggestions, if we contract the sense of the whole of this into efforts to work only for those, who have spiritual life. There are several points in this lesson given

by Our Lord, that it will be of great utility to study. It is in fact a tabular statement of Christian social duty. It is very concise, and strangely minute. There is great significance in Christ's classification, of the works and the workers, in the scene to which we refer. Some workers are represented by Him as ineffective, though not inactive. These are the mere nominal Christians, who, without true regard for Him as the Saviour, do acts of kindness on the ground of human affection. He speaks of others as effective; and they are His true followers—the "sheep"—who hear His voice, and who through love to Him, labour for the world, for which He died. Both these classes of persons are said to be unconscious of the extent of their operations.

This unconsciousness is a sublime doctrine. It has, a most gracious bearing on the case; and forms a groundwork for Christian unity and co-operation, of the most extensive kind. Jesus actually ordains this condition, that we may not encumber our minds, with the effort to ascertain, here and now, how much of our own, or of other people's labour, is fully and truly useful to Him. This will be revealed only at the end of the age; and we may, therefore, work on confidently,

leaving results to be revealed by Him to whom the service is rendered. This very unconsciousness ought to excite a thoroughness of action; and the greatest exertion to perform perfectly the duties required of us. The right understanding of these duties is, therefore, of the utmost importance; and our Saviour's subdivision is in itself expository of them. The operations that rank themselves under the heads given in our Lord's catalogue, are familiar to us all. We know them as work, which, in all its phases, both of individual and collective action, is continually being done. In treating of it as six separate proceedings, it is not represented to be the six deeds of one person, nor those of six different persons, but six recognised forms of service, in which Christians engage.

Considerably varied in degree, some of these are largely undertaken, while others are but slightly entered on. The first three have properly had great energy applied to them. They relate to the case of the poor; and, as such, claim primary attention. The sick, the stranger, and the prisoner, are few in comparison with those whose condition of poverty absorbs the general sympathy. Christ places them first on His list of sufferers; and

allots to them cumulative deeds of service. The thoroughness of the provision thus required for the poor is remarkable. Charitable action, according to the law of Christ, is no light work. The Saviour details minutely in what it should consist. He did not name the three items in vain :—meat, drink, and clothing. They are representative terms. They stand for the material things, which suit the state of the suffering individuals, according to their respective requirements; and are to be supplied them in measure corresponding to the circumstances of the society of which they form part. The share of the poor is to be matter of equitable calculation. A proportion of the goods of the community falls to them; and is to be administered on such a system as to benefit them, morally as well as materially. The charitable action that undertakes to perform the law of Christ for the poor, devolves on the rich. The poor have their duties under other enactments of the service; they are necessarily excluded from the first three deeds; and are, under them, the passive objects of the covenant of Christian work.

The provision for poverty requires something more from the rich than the surrender of substance. It de-

mands thought and time. The intelligence which their position enables them to cultivate, and the time that their freedom from anxiety and care about their own wants affords them, they are called on to bestow; and when the aggregate of these is considered, and the number of poor to be administered to, in our community, is calculated, it will be seen, that the labour claimed at this period of Christian time, by our Lord from His people, is important. To perform it completely, there should be a force in action, consisting of all the available powers that can be assembled, in this age of great capability. There is a grand principle involved in this Gospel Poor-law. Its provisions enforce that the present poor are to be removed out of present poverty. The labour of other members of the community is to be devoted to this end; and it is to be done as the first step of Christian work. This proceeding does not purport the banishment of poverty, nor supersede its presence. There is no contradiction of the declaration, "the poor ye have always with you," conveyed by the act dictated. Notwithstanding its efforts, the poor shall never fail out of the land. The ranks of the pauper will still be continually recruited by the accidents of human life. The providence that rules over

all Divine arrangements forbids such a prospect as the extinction of poverty to exist ; and it is its province, not ours, to secure the perpetuation of this order of affairs. Its course will, in the natural progress of events, ever cause, that fresh cases shall fill the places of those that are, by our instrumentality, raised from the low estate of physical privation.

Jesus implies much by His urgency in this particular instance. He acknowledges the moral trial of bodily wants ; and He accords to it His sacred pity. It is the spirit of His law to remove whatever is unfavourable to man, and inimical to his interests, temporal and spiritual. With what true sympathy Christ protects those interests ! He will not have the moral strength tested through bodily pain and privation. His directions are that meat, drink, and clothing, are to be given to the poor, lest he steal, break the restraint imposed on his natural conscience, and impoverish others. Physical suffering is forbidden by the Saviour as a means of preventing moral injury. He never instituted it for the suppression of crime. God's rule of action is not the infliction of bodily pain for the promotion of spiritual purity. The reverse is His course of treatment. The sun shines on the evil and on the



good to demonstrate this. Nothing but sinless humanity could sinlessly endure the loss of all earthly comforts : hence, none but Christ could suffer all the trials of the flesh, and issue pure from the ordeal. ·

In the final state, when “he that is unjust shall be unjust still, and he that is filthy shall be filthy still,” it will be God’s time to deprive, unclothe, leave thirst unslaked, and desire unsupplied ; but, in this present age, “He wills not the death of a sinner,” nor the perpetuation of his vileness, nor the continuation of his misery ; and, therefore, He wills not the poverty of the poor. He wills that the necessities of a man—his primary needs—those things that support his bodily life, should be supplied him, not only for the purpose of sparing physical pain, but for the prevention of moral failure. Christians do not sufficiently study this latter object, in their effort to compass the former. The impulse to relieve mere physical distress is so strong and absorbing, that the second, and more important part of the design, is often lost sight of.

The consequence of this superficial attention to the claim of the poor, increases the difficulties of Christian



labour greatly; and frequently causes each work to necessitate further acts of ministration.

On the thorough performance of the first three deeds of the Saviour's catalogue, depends the whole of the rest of the service. When the separate actions are not perfectly done, each deed becomes only an introduction to the next. Labour improperly done for the poor, or left undone, entails fresh operations; and, at every step, the work increases in difficulty. It seems, at first sight, easy enough to grant to them all that they ask. Their appeal appears to be a simple call for meat, clothing, and shelter; and the rich do not refuse to supply them.

If the mere act of giving fulfilled the claim of the poor, it would be done successfully; but the work is not accomplished by the transference of materials from one class to the other. The need of the case is to be met with greater accuracy than this. The work is, primarily, entirely physical in its nature; but it becomes moral by association. The spiritual aspect of it is no present concern of the workers. With regard to it the law of *unconsciousness* prevails. The actor has no right

to any knowledge, beyond that which uprightness of conduct reveals, about the absolute connection between Christ and the subject of his deed. His work is an act of faith; and he that doubts that it will be accepted hereafter, as done to Jesus, doubts not only the sinner, but the Saviour.

It is very important to note this view of the case. Faith is the substance of Christian work; "and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Ordinary Christian work is physical, that it may be moral. It need not necessarily be religious. The mixture of spiritual with bodily ministration is not forbidden in Scripture, but it is not enjoined. It is with regard to this, that our Lord distinctly lays down *unconsciousness* as the rule of the service. He does not connect the power of His Spirit with the relief of the flesh; He chooses that it shall manifest itself independently; and that there shall be no temptation to simulate its effects. Pretence to spiritual life is easily put forth; morality it is impossible to counterfeit; and morality is one of the outward and visible signs of Christ's kingdom, on which His people are warranted to insist. As to the higher life of its subjects, no man's claim or interest therein should influence his

neighbour's charity. The righteous are to speak the truth in the day that they exclaim, "Lord, when saw we *Thee* an hungred, and fed *Thee*? or thirsty, and gave *Thee* drink? When saw we *Thee* a stranger, and took *Thee* in? or naked, and clothed *Thee*? Or when saw we *Thee* sick, or in prison, and came unto *Thee*?"

The donation of a certain portion of our property to the poor, is only the surface of charity—"a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal," if its work do not directly tend to the furtherance of the Heavenly kingdom, even though it may fulfil every item in the schedule, which Christ has laid before His Church. The value of this document is enormous. It constitutes an indictment, under which Jesus can formally arraign His people, in a future day, and by which each can test the course of his present life-work for his Saviour.

The intentions of the benevolent who occupy themselves with Christian acts may be good and true, but their deeds may not promote the progress of Christianity; and, only, in so far as they do so, will their service be recounted by Christ in His future summary. He will be accurate in this matter. His statement of work will be in accordance with what

has actually been achieved. About that which has been aimed at, but not done, He will say nothing ; it enters nowhere into His calculation. He registers no failures ; and this, which is the comfort and blessing of the Christian, is his greatest stimulus to exertion.

Our Lord does not estimate the amount of property dispensed for Him, nor the quantity retained for personal gratification. He simply requires that, with little or much, the work shall be done—more men made to acknowledge His law, and His law made more honourable. It is entirely a question of produce. No matter what amount of his substance a man uses for Christian work, if he employ nine-tenths of it, or only one-tenth, the examination will not search farther than the result exhibited—the evil he has suppressed, and the good he has encouraged. If this were not so, how would the rich shine forth in the judgment, and, by their wealth, obtain distinguished portions in the kingdom of their Father ! It is very possible to give much, and yet do little. Great expenditure of money, even with the right desire, does not always accomplish the right end. Indiscriminate benevolence commits great waste. There is a lavish liberality common, for which there is nothing,

comparatively, to show. In this day, "Give, give," saith the preacher; and congregations freely respond; but it is often "the blind leading the blind;" for the teacher and the taught take little heed to the outlay, so as to make it really profitable to the cause of God; and truly extend and support the kingdom of Christ. A cup of cold water put to a neighbour's lips in the hour of his thirst, may be more effective in this respect than the distribution of large sums of money.

Charity is generally powerful in proportion as it is direct and personal. It consists not in vague distribution for "the love of God," but in precise economy for the use of man. Many a man gives from his heart, and the gift may reach the poor, and pass through his pocket; it may bear temporal fruit; the receiver may be bodily enriched by it; but it may also impoverish his spirit. No Christian service may be done by the act. It may have banished no evil, but, on the contrary, induced offence. There may have occurred, with the material increase it occasioned, a moral declension. A pauper spirit may have grown out of it; and a grace, hitherto flourishing, may have been caused to wither. Wants may have been created by a superfluity granted. The

remedy may have been worse than the disease; and the harm may, perhaps, overpower the benefit of the transaction. Mental effort must supplement the desire to do good; and charity must be applied under the direction of enlightened Christian intellect.

It is necessary to comprehend what is required to be done before work can be undertaken. Individuals have no right to move in compliance with their hearts' emotions, unless it is clear to their understanding that there is some utility in the proceeding; and it is as important a duty as any laid on the followers of Jesus, to cultivate the power, and the habit, of using their understanding in His service. For lack of this, a great part of the work intended for Him operates the other way, and becomes "love's labour lost."

The attempts of individual Christians to render duty to the Saviour, are, probably, less subject to this fate, than the efforts of those engines that are so largely in use at this time—societies and associations, &c. In them, it too frequently happens, that persons agglomerate their wishes, and their purses, and omit their brains. It is true that immense difficulty attends human combinations, but this difficulty is surmounted

in labours that contemplate worldly things; and charitable action, which is connected with earthly materials, can be as easily controlled. Men enter into the merest fraction of the details in which their temporal interests are implicated. They descend to calculate the minutest item, and criticise the merest atoms that belong to their mercantile works; and they administer with sheer economy, and acute adaptability, the different integral portions of them, so that no wasteful or useless movement is permitted. This is what they call “good work” in their temporal affairs; and, yet, the very same men do “bad work,” in the matter in which eternal benefits are at stake!

In this day, Christian work should be done, not only with Christian hearts and hands, but by Christian heads. If they were brought to bear on it, in any degree proportionate to the labour they do for objects, not, perhaps, in any way unchristian, but probably ex-christian, in the sense of direct personal service to Christ, this period of the history of Christendom, would present a bright array of claimants for heavenly commendation.

There is little sign of the intellectual culture of the age in the public management of our poor. Our laws



for the relief of the destitute, do not keep pace with the mental power exhibited in our institutions for other purposes; and while they are imperfect, the action to be undertaken for the classes next in order beyond them, cannot be performed with any prospect of success.

The fact that our poor relief is done according to a legal form does not deprive it of its charitable character. The institution of the Poor Law is on this very foundation; and its origin is interesting as forming the crisis, in which private Christian sentiment was first enforced, as public duty.\*

It happened, that, in the reaction with regard to clerical authority, which set in after the Reformation, popular disobedience to the voice of the Church rose to such a height, that, on the subject of almsgiving, the ecclesiastics could get no attention whatever from their

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\* So early as 1530 (prior to the interference of the secular authority in the matter in England), at Ypres, in Belgium, the magistrates assumed the control of the donations for the poor. Before this no Government action in the case of the poor is on record, but it may be inferred to have formed a part of the Grecian legislation: *Oration of Lycias*, B. i., 343: and of the Roman, also, from the *Lex Frumentaria* of the younger Gracchus.



flocks. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the bishops and priests appealed to the secular arm for force to compel the rich to give doles to the poor; and a law was passed to enable them to bring defaulters to justice, thus leading the way for the English Poor Law, which has since set the grand example to the other nations of the earth, of State provision for the poor.

Up to this period, it had been the practice of all Christendom to leave the poor to the care of the Church; and the principle on which this was done, is, probably, the root of the evil condition in which we find them at this day. Their relief was made a religious exercise; and spiritual interests were complicated with it. The false doctrine of works prevailed. Romish teaching made benevolence pious selfishness; and caused it to assume a wrong aspect both to donor and recipient. The poor man was a treasure to the rich, whose "key to Heaven," and "path to Paradise," he was likely to become; and he learned to prize the privileges of his position. Through supplying his wants great things were to be gained; and he was, consequently, self-important and self-indulgent. There grew up in the country, franked by the temper of the day, a lazy, idle

class, which depended on the gifts of the wealthy ; and this formed the foundation of a pauperdom, which lies outside the circle of our lower working people ; and barely screens them from the criminal mass, in which our civilization loses itself.

The old error concerning almsgiving was a beautiful one. The fervour of its godliness shines through its ignorance, and throws a sanctity, which we dare not disrespect, over the tombs of our ancestors. Their deeds of charity were lovely. We have them monumented in marble, and graven in brass, storied on church walls, and recorded in the archives of the nation. Honoured generations gone down to dust, who made their Christian work perpetual by endowments for its maintenance, “ all died in faith ” that their good purpose wrought the will of their Lord. But the acts that “ followed them ” are few, and small ; and much still remains to be done, of which their philosophy dreamed not. Notwithstanding our increased knowledge, we have, as yet, performed little better service. The secular Government, which now undertakes the charge of the poor, has had no great success ; and the effect of individual action is imperceptible in the case of that pauperism, which is a fixed blot on our social system.

Distinct from the casual poor, those who by age, and by the accidents of life, become unable to support themselves, there exists a body of people of invariable character, which we may call the unindustrious destitute. Numerically this class is not given to change ; and constitutionally it alters not at all. The annual statement of the numbers relieved by the Poor Law has varied very slightly for the last fifteen years ; \* and the criminal class, with which alone this interchanges, has been similarly stationary. It is remarkable, that in both these social divisions, the numbers do not pass out into other sections of the community. They are singularly adhesive to their type, and curiously consolidated together. Families retain special characters and habits in both of these, in spite of all efforts to induce them to alter their ways of living, and to assume different places in society. That this is the fact with regard to paupers, was attested before the Poor Law Commissioners some years ago. There has been no difference in their circumstances since then ; and the same is stated of criminals on the best

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\* Paupers under Poor Law care in 1850 . . . . 920,543.

Ditto . . . . . 1865 . . . . 972,700.

authority.\* In this age of progress, there has been no progress in these cases. We have gone forward in other respects; in this we have stood still. Physical supplies are largely administered to the poor; and spiritual teaching is given them, with earnestness and diligence; but both fail to produce the desired moral results. The pauper readily becomes the criminal. Privation does not chasten his spirit, nor quicken his moral sense, while it tends to the increase instead of the diminution of his race.

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\* “We have three generations of paupers,” etc.—*Evidence before Poor Law Commissioners*, p. 204.

The Inspector of Prisons, N. District, in his Report for the year 1864, page 190, makes the following statement about a criminal family :—

“The father has been 3 times in prison.

“The mother „ 5 „ „

“A third brother 4 „ „ and 3 years in a Reformatory school.

“A sister 1 „ „ and 5 years in a Reformatory school.

“Different members of the mother’s family, 10 times in prison, with 13 years at Reformatory schools; making in this one family the aggregate numbers of 25 times in prison, 31 years in Reformatory schools.”

Thus far our Christian work, as it regards the primary object of our Lord's solicitude, has not accomplished much. The agencies that we have employed, for the material benefit of the poor, have not been satisfactory. Our failure has even gone farther in its effects, and has produced a state of physical disease, which has increased the difficulty of our moral work. Bodily malformation, mental deterioration, and moral degradation, add stage after stage to our troubles. When improved scientific knowledge shall have enabled us to alter our system with regard to the sick, the labour bestowed on the fifth work may lighten that of the others. As the matter now stands, the poor become the sick, and the sick degenerate into the immoral, and *vice versa*.

It is easy to understand how this may happen. The inquiries of every day throw light on this subject; all recent investigation develops the need of attention, to the minute particulars of the cases, that appeal to us as the poor and the sick. Applications intended for their benefit may, if not suitable to their condition, only change the phase of their suffering; and move them from one class to another, of those which form the subject of Christian work. The workers may well be circum-

spect in their movements, lest they accumulate their labours. Their performance of the first three acts of their service, may give rise to the fifth, and increase its difficulties. Their treatment of the sick is liable to add members to the prison classes; and thus become, indirectly, the means of promoting immorality. We have been long unconsciously doing this; and have been creating the material on which we are called to work, in the sixth degree of our service.

Our Lord, foreseeing that the consequence of failure in attending to the poor and the sick would be the maintenance of crime, emphatically bespeaks our charity for the prisoner. The fact that He makes a special point of this case is very remarkable. It is definite as to the nature of the work which He requires; and it sets at rest all questions, as to the character of the persons for whom the labour is to be done. They may be sinful, as well as poor, and sick. Ungodliness, instead of disqualifying for the action of Christian benevolence, forms a claim for it; this is the only meaning that can be given to the Saviour's list of appeals. Those who freely grant to the first five divisions of the work an open signification; and who are willing to believe

that the unconverted poor, and the unconverted sick, may be the subjects of their work, often deny that the criminal has a similar privilege. They restrict the words of Christ, to those who unjustly suffer imprisonment; and only in pursuit of "the ninety-ninth sheep," or "the lost piece of silver," would venture in among the criminals. But Christ is not alluding to the duty of seeking and saving in His account. He entirely confines His remarks to other works of charity; and in the institution of *unconsciousness*, prevents the exclusion of any. The whole force of the argument goes either one way or the other. Jesus authorizes selection in all cases, or He forbids it.

We believe that He identifies Himself with all the hungry, all the thirsty, all the naked, all the strangers, all the sick, and even with all the prisoners. Practically, no one thinks of separating the Saviour from any of these but the last; and all concur in seeing Christ represented in every form that human suffering takes.

His oneness with His true members, the converted, spiritually renewed Church, is a special and peculiar connection, about which there is no unconsciousness, but which is manifested and known in the intercourse of believers with each other. In this character, as singularly



united by a particular bond, they are bound to treat each other in a manner quite different from the exercise of charity towards all men, to which the judgment described by Matthew refers. The "goat" as well as the "sheep" are challenged, in the acts concerning which Jesus inquires ; and when both of these are made answerable for the performance, it cannot be confined to work done for the known brethren. Some of these may be found among the poor, the sick, the strangers, and the prisoner ; and when they are, they call forth a closer interest, and a warmer sympathy ; but the power of Christian charity is not to be spent in separating out these individual cases from the mass. The Lord Himself arranges this, as His people move onward, according to His direction ; and He will, in due time, make known to them how, and when, they have "entertained angels unawares."

When parables and figures of speech were our general form of utterance, feelings were stronger, and perception clearer of the substitutionary nature of the Saviour's office, in connection with the every-day proceedings of human society. A beautiful instance of this is to be seen in a letter of Bishop Ridley's to Mr. Cecil, on the subject of the London poor ; and we cannot forbear



inserting it, as a lesson in divinity and charity, and an illustration of our point :—

Good Mr. Cecil, I must be a suitor to you in our Master Christ's, cause. I beseech you be good unto him. The matter is, sir, alas, he hath lyen too long abroad, as you do know, without lodging, in the streets of London; both hungry, naked, and cold. Now, thanks be unto Almighty God, the citizens are willing to refresh him, and to give him both meat, drink, clothing and firing. But alas, sir, they lack lodging for him; for in some one house they say they are fain to lodge three families under one roof. Sir, there is a wide large house of the King's Majesty's called Bridewell, that would wonderful well serve to lodge Christ in, if he might find such good friends in the Court as would procure in his cause. Surely, I have so good an opinion in the King's Majesty, that if Christ had such faithful and hearty friends that would heartily speak for him, he should undoubtedly speed at the King's Majesty's hands. Sir, I have promised my brethren the citizens in this matter to move you, because I take you for one that feareth God, and would not that Christ should lie no more abroad in the street. There is a rumour that one goeth about to buy that house of the King's Majesty, and to pull it down. If there be any such thing, for God's sake speak you in our Master's cause. I have written unto Mr. Gates more at large in this matter. I join you with him, and all that look for Christ's benediction, in the latter day. If Mr. Cheke was with you, in whose recovery God be blessed, I would surely make him in this behalf one of Christ's special advo-

cates, or rather one of his principal proctors ; and surely I would not be said nay. And thus I wish you in Christ ever well to fare.

From my house at Fulham, this present Sunday.

Yours in Christ,

NIC. LONDON.\*

We have been of late awakened to a new sense of duty to the sick; and some of the best movements of our age have been in their favour. The fifth act of Christian work is progressing; and we are daily discovering its connection with the others. The sixth presents us with the greatest difficulty of all; and Christ was not unmindful of its peculiarity. He treats it as different from them; and, by His mode of stating it, implies that it is a movement apart from ordinary life; and one which takes us out of the sphere of the other duties of it. There is a reason, no doubt, for placing it last in the order of recapitulation. It is the latest proceeding in which our Christian energies are called on to engage. The poor we have always *with* us, the stranger *comes* to us, the sick are *within* our border; but the prisoner is outside the camp.

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\* *Lansdowne MSS., A. D., 1552. Holinshed. Stow's Survey of London.*

To seek him we have to forsake the circle in which we live; and to venture into the domain of the enemy. The criminal's state is not the common state; and therefore, to touch, and to relieve him, ordinary virtuous people have to encounter the most formidable obstacles. To rescue him, they must make aggressive adventures into a place where their work shall meet the most decided resistance. All the other deeds of charity are submitted to by the objects of them with entire acquiescence. They are agreeable to their subjects; but the sixth is not. The poor and the sick are willing to be operated on; but the prisoner is unwilling to permit any action that interferes with him in his special character. As the poor, or the sick, he freely consents to the agency of charity; but when it approaches him in the sixth form, and takes him morally in hand, his opposition is great. The spirit of all evil sympathizes with this resistance, and puts forth all its powers to aid it. The most comprehensive efforts of charity are needed, in order to cope with the vigour and strength of this potent adversary to morality.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Christ in Prison.

#### SYMPATHY WITH CRIMINALS.

A Strong Repulsion..Jewish Prisons..The Repealed Law..Our Cruelties..A Remarkable Lesson..Imprisonment Sanctioned..A House of Mercy.

THERE are no words in Scripture that have been more misinterpreted than these, "I was in prison." They have been referred to the visitation, in their captivity, of martyrs to the cause of truth, but this assumption narrows the application of the statement to certain periods of history, and to select persons; and it excludes altogether from prison-visiting, the greater portion of the Christian world. Such limitation of Christian work is, as we have shown, entirely inadmissible; it is a service laid on all Christians during the whole of this age. The character of their actions as described by our Lord, relates to works without restriction of

person, place, or time. Poverty, sickness, and imprisonment stand in the same category, according to the Saviour's declaration; all are estates to which Christians are liable, though, doubtless, the last in order, is the least common; and, therefore, the most difficult to deal with. It is easy to conceive the operation of charity, in the case of the first and second class of sufferers; but the third presents circumstances that seem so extraordinary, that it requires some consideration in order to comprehend its nature.

It is quite evident, that Christ's meaning is as wide as the breadth of the kingdom He was contemplating when He spoke; and that He was referring to the fundamental laws of its social state. He intimated that Christendom would ever have the poor, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner to minister to; and He directs that each act of ministration should be done as unto Him. He is present in all these representative persons. They are equally His members; and, in rejecting any, we rend Him. Some of these sufferers are freely admitted to the sympathy of Christians; but one is almost by common consent, abandoned to his fate. A strong repulsion is nurtured to

this one class, on grounds the most specious and deluding. There is an impression that it consists of persons who have forfeited their claim to the general benevolence; and who are under a punitive discipline, of which all the rest of the community are legal executors. It is a common belief that an abhorrence of criminals accords with God's hatred of sin; and that it is, therefore, a right sentiment towards the doers of it. Not only is a decided aversion manifested to persons who become subject to imprisonment; but they are even persecuted among us.

There is much that should be altered, in the prevalent state of mind towards these unhappy people, with whom the Saviour identifies Himself, when He says, "I was in prison." The prisoner has His sympathy, wherefore not that of His followers? No plea can be more powerful. It is exactly that which He advanced for the sick, the poor, and the stranger. Christ makes no difference: He excommunicates none: the needs of all are His needs; and the duty which He lays on His servants concerning one, He requires from them for all. His words were prophetic of the new order of government which He was ushering in. Up to the time of

His coming, there had been no idea of love and mercy for the culprit, connected with the institution of a prison. It had existed only for the execution of wrath ; and was all justice, and no mercy.

The Jewish prisons were merely places to retain in custody debtors, or condemned persons, during the interval that might elapse between their seizure and punishment. The practice was to follow arrest with immediate trial, and execution of sentence, which was not imprisonment, but some species of bodily torture. The administration of justice was short and violent ; no other action was known in connection with it. Our Lord was referring to the laws of Christendom, when He supposed the existence of a state, in which access to prisoners, for the purposes of charity, would be practicable. This state is being but slowly elaborated even now by the Christian mind ; and, hence, hitherto, the sixth work has been but slightly attempted. The relics of the old system have been retained ; and they have clung to Christianity with the tenacity of a death grasp. A strange affection is maintained, for the idea of retribution. Sacrifice for sin, made once, and for ever, on Calvary, is not fully admitted. The knowledge of its substitutionary nature

was hidden for centuries in the figment of the mass; and it is this error which has perpetuated the doctrine of continual expiation. On it has been founded all the prison cruelties of Christian times, which rival in torture those of heathen ages, and very little differ from them in character.

It has not been understood, that the whole law of vengeance is altogether repealed, under the Christian covenant; and that any proceeding connected with it is to be avoided. The imprisonment of which Christ speaks could not be expressive of it; and it must be an imprisonment on totally different grounds, of which He says, "I was in prison." His salvation banished the Jewish penal system; and it could never be compatible with that of the Greek or Roman. The knowledge of this has not sufficiently operated on the Christian mind; and Christendom has almost universally adopted the practices of the Jew, and the heathen, in its prison legislation, instead of forming plans for itself.

Great ignorance of the relationship of Christianity to moral law has prevailed; and much evil, has, consequently, been done in the name of Him, who bears our sorrows now, as He did our guilt, in the day of His



perfect atonement. Among these present sorrows, there is imprisonment as well as poverty, and sickness, and loneliness. Our mistakes, shortcomings, and failures increase not only our own griefs and troubles but His. "In all our afflictions," self-wrought as they are, "He is afflicted;" and while we aggravate them by neglect of Christian work, we add to His, in heedless indifference. How long-suffering has He been, during our mistreatment of the poor, though the hungry, the thirsty, and the naked, are Himself! How has He borne with us, while we have dealt ill with the stranger. so little relieved the sick; and, though He is the prisoner, how graciously has He submitted to our cruelties!

It should be remembered, that it is with the openly criminal class, not with the merely vicious, that Jesus identifies Himself. Oh, endless charity! This is one of the "heights and depths of that infinite love, which passeth all understanding;" but is within the compass of His boundless compassion, "who became sin for us;" and is in accordance with the amazing condescension of Him, who "ate and drank with publicans and sinners!"

The tenderness and pity of Christ for criminals is touchingly illustrated by the scene recorded in John viii. 4-11.:—"They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

This is a most remarkable lesson on the treatment of offenders against the moral law. In it Jesus forbids the

assumption of anything like a vindictive attitude on the part of society, and strongly enforces forbearance of punishment. In sanctioning imprisonment, He does not connect with it the idea of retribution for guilt. The duty of Christians in relation to persons convicted of crime is something far different. It is comprised in the words of the Lord to the culprit: "Go, and sin no more."

This emphatic injunction should be echoed by the followers of the Saviour, and be accompanied by such aid as the transgressor needs, in order to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." The prison was ordained by Christ for the purpose of affording an opportunity for the performance of this act of charity. Without incarceration it would be impracticable. The words of advice, though divinely wise, would be but empty sound, and their utterance, without corresponding effort to provide for the difficulty, would be like the command of those who say, "Be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding they give them not the things which are needful to the body."

Not such sympathy as this is that of Jesus for the criminal. He becomes the prisoner to show the nature of

the prison institution in His kingdom ; and to proclaim that the Christian Prison is a house of mercy ; and not a place of vengeance. The solemn task of administering this mercy devolves on Christians ; and the mode of its fulfilment is one of the gravest questions of the day.

## CHAPTER V.

### *The Christian Prison.*

Deterioration of Prisoners..The Sense of the Age..Retaliation..  
Heathen Jurisprudence..Ancient Lawgivers..Transition-diffi-  
culty..Forfeited Right..Prejudice against Prisoners' Labour..  
Honest Industry..The Sweat of the Brow..Prayer and Visiting.

THE idea that a certain amount of punitive action must be carried out in prison, whatever the result of it may be to the criminal, is not so firmly fixed as it used to be. Formerly, it was supposed that the infliction of penalties for offences, involved no responsibility connected with the moral improvement of the culprit ; but this opinion is giving way before a clearer perception of Christian duty. It is acknowledged, now, that no system of prison management is Christian, which does not contemplate the reformation of transgressors. It is also perceived, that much that is practised in our places of incarceration, is not only not morally beneficial in its action, but positively the reverse. The sense entertained by the public of the

effect of imprisonment is very marked, in the treatment given to released prisoners. They are regarded as generally deteriorated, by the process to which they have been subjected; and a strong objection to their return to society is manifested. It is, of course, impossible to gratify this sentiment. Criminals cannot be perpetually detained in prison; and their re-admission to the community must be secured on some equitable terms. The protest of the moral members of society to their presence is quite just; but it would cease to be so, if the released prisoners re-entered society corrected, and with a hope of amendment; and there is no doubt that if any proof were given that the action of the prison was reformatory, the refusal to receive them would be rescinded. There is not this proof. The evidence is on the other side. The statistics of crime establish the fact that it is unrestrained by the present penal system; and they form the strongest testimony to the truth of the prevalent impression, as to the character of prison influence.

There is no faith in it as a moral agency. The word which Christ hallowed has been defiled by the misapplication of its operations; and it does not convey a Christian

sense to the hearers ; the sound, on the contrary, has become a bye-word and a reproach.

Gospel privileges are not denied to prisoners : access to the means of grace is free ; but there evidently is something done, and something left undone, which produce ill effects. Many instances could be cited of the hardening effect of punitive inflictions. Judgments do as little for our criminals as they did for Pharaoh of old ; and it is difficult to conceive why the plan is continued, which has, in such a signal manner, repeatedly failed to demonstrate its advantages. Without advocating any sickly philanthropy, we would press for the examination of the whole tone and temper of our criminal law. It will be found at variance with the feeling of the men called on, in this day, to administer it ; and the result of this is manifest in their growing reluctance to use it. Objections to prosecute, for fear of subjecting offenders to injurious conditions ; and refusals to convict, lest sentences, abhorrent to the Christian feeling of the country, should be carried into effect, are common. The enactments of our statutes, in relation to crime, do not carry the sense of the age with them. It is not possible that

they should, for they do not correspond with our present enlightened understanding of the Gospel.

The reason for this may be traced to the fact, that the framework of our jurisprudence was formed in pagan Rome. But this framework which has ceased to fit our judicial proceedings, has fallen away from it ; and it only remains to encumber them, with its ungainly presence. Several of the phenomena of our criminal code arise from this circumstance. There are remnants of the Roman elaborate definition of "rights" among our laws, which are marvellous in their minuteness and subtlety ; but which only serve to bewilder our perceptions of equity.

The curious disquisitions on crime which we derive from our heathen ancestors, are a digest of human nature, valuable *per se* ; but the sequence to which they are allied is wholly inapplicable to us. The traditional knowledge of God's ordinance of a sacrifice for sin pervades the whole of them. Every act of guilt, suggested to the heathen mind an act of retaliation ; and, on this principle, for every transgression there was a physical penalty, supposed to be apportioned to the offence, exacted as a satisfaction to the Deity ; and



as marking the public sense of morality, which was outraged by it. Beyond this, no further notice was taken of the criminal. From the moment his crime was detected, the sword of vengeance was put in motion. Everything that was agreeable to his feelings, and honourable to him, as a man, was removed, and a process of degradation steadily enforced. The three degrees of *capitis minutio*, by which the Romans reduced a man for crime from freedom to slavery, left no hope of his restoration to his former condition.

This was, no doubt, the primitive conception of humanity concerning the punishment of sin ; and it was developed by all pre-Christian civilizations. The legislature of Greece revealed it ; and their laws were but precursors of the more refined philosophy of the following empire. Wherever the Romans set up their standard, they set up their principles of justice ; and there they remain to this day. Few Christian nations have as yet emancipated themselves, in their prison discipline, from the yoke of heathenism. By degrees we have shaken off some of its impositions, the repugnance of which to the spirit of Christianity, could not be hidden ; but the protest against them has been feeble, and its action slow. Centuries

have come and gone, and we have patiently borne the burden, with a resolution and loyalty worthy of a better cause. Popery taught us submission on grounds as untenable as the theory it indorsed ; and we have, therefore, been endeavouring to deter men from crime, by an illicit agency ; and we have been neglecting to apply the true remedies provided for the purpose.

The transition of power from secular to ecclesiastical Rome, scarcely altered the state of our prison affairs at all. The Roman Catholic Church permitted a penal system as unchristian as that of the Roman Catholic empire ; and as one occupied the ground of the other, very little change occurred in the nature of prison work. The ramifications into which the old system had run, were left untouched ; and some equally objectionable novel points were grafted on the original institution. The great Tullian, Rome's circular prison, has marked indelibly the thoughts of ages ; and the cruelties practised in it, and in the Ergastula, were continued under Christian rule ; instead of being obliterated with the other relics of heathendom.

It is time that there was some discrimination in this matter. We overrate the wisdom of ancient lawgivers ;

and the worth of ancient laws. The statutes of Solon, Lycurgus, Draco, and Cæsar, &c., should no longer be said to form the groundwork of our code. Christianity does not embody their laws, but substitutes for them its own sublime and simple rule of life. In the Christian prison, the heathen sages of antiquity have but a subordinate place. Christ is its supreme legislator; and He abolishes the whole of their theory of criminal treatment, root and branch, destroying it utterly. Popery never sweeps away the doctrine of vengeance; on the contrary, it retains it, and practises it in the name of Christ; and adds to it Jewish superstitions, and devices of its own, with which it has cemented a system of judicature, which it retains wherever it is regnant. It is not commonly remembered that our prison plans are mostly pagan or papal; and not yet assimilated to Scriptural principles.

The ideal of the Christian prison is not yet developed among us. It is still latent; the heathen connection is not quite broken off; it remains, and confuses the popular mind to a most disadvantageous extent. We degrade our criminals hopelessly by acting on the ancient model. Imprisonment is a downward step which a man

with us never retrieves ; while it should be a vestibule to a better state. The formation of a Christian prison, is a Christian work which has yet to be accomplished.

Other parts of Christendom have been enlightened by rays of increased Christian intelligence on this subject ; even places where Christianity is more vitiated than in this land, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and France, have been visited by gleams of light about prisons ; and it is time that these fragments of truth were drawn together and consolidated on a right basis. Times are out of joint ; and our movements in relation to crime are, probably, more so than any other. Conventionalisms which confuse our sense of right and wrong mislead us considerably on this subject.

We may, perhaps, consider our prison system to be in a state of transition. The authorities are experimenting, with laudable zeal, to discover how to apply the reformatory scheme in their establishments ; and the same difficulty meets them in this case, as that which confronts legislative interference in the general education of the country. It is as hard to apply moral as mental instruction, on any universal scheme. There are, in both cases, so many different qualities to be considered for,

that it would be as impossible to construct a uniform plan for mental or moral cultivation, as it would be to put people of all sizes into garments of the same dimensions.

Every report published by the prisons' department of the Government, shows how anxiously all practicable openings are made to admit reformatory action, within the dark circles of crime. The returns state, with perfect candour, the inefficacy of the old proceedings ; and eagerly note every improvement effected by the new course of action.

There is much to be learned from these reports of the condition of the men and women in our prisons, that cannot fail to interest every heart ; and excite a warm desire, that the true principles of Christian charity may rule, not only in them but in the community towards their inmates.

The virtuous and moral often forget that they have such fellow-creatures ; and the pious do not always remember, that their Lord appeals for them, as for Himself ; and that He embraces them in His words : " I was in prison." As human beings in the most trying of all circumstances, He feels for them ; and He asks our

compassion for their case. It is of great importance to grant this on right grounds. Prisoners are not to be pitied for the loss of gratifications, in which they were in the habit of indulging. They are properly cut off from the enjoyments of life, and curtailed of all but the bare necessities of existence. Even these, in the Christian prison, should be purchased at the cost of the offender's labour. The criminal has forfeited the right to be supported, like the virtuous poor, at the expense of the community; and until the prison system is entirely based on the principle, that "if a man will not work neither shall he eat," it will not be a really Christian institution.

Christianity has but very simple reformatory process to propose. It is merely that of work.

There is a general impression, that this is provided in our prisons; and that "labour," and "hard labour," in prison, mean reproductive employment; but this is not always the case. It is not the rule, but the exception, when it occurs; and it is, no doubt, carried out under great difficulty, wherever it is attempted. This is probably the reason that much of the physical exertion

required from the prisoners is entirely unproductive ; and that the moral effect of it is nil.

It is worth trying whether this influence would increase with real, useful work, such as the reasoning faculties of the criminals could understand and approve of. But prisons, like workhouses, are under the management of authorities, little likely to undertake the trouble of surmounting the many and great obstacles to the profitable employment of their charges.

The deep-seated prejudice against the competition of such labour with that of the working classes, operates powerfully on their minds ; and for fear of exciting it, the attempt to carry out such a system of discipline, as would compel criminals to earn their support is postponed, until better public opinion prevail on the subject. Meantime, this postponement is working all the evil of which idleness and fulness of bread are capable ; and charity urges with all its force, that there is no security in any course, but that of insisting on the practice of the great virtue of honest industry.

“ In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,” said the Creator ; whether the sweat is produced by mental



or bodily toil, there is to be a certain individual effort made, in order to fulfil the law of God in the matter of providing for our needs. It is this exact law which the criminal breaks. He will satisfy his desires without complying with this ordinance; and it is only by obliging him to obey it, that we reduce him to moral order, a condition alone to be attained by the direct application of labour to the purposes of life. When those who have refused to work, and who instead have violated the decalogue, are brought to perform, even compulsorily, the common duty of man, a great point in morality is gained; and a lesson is taught, in the most impressive manner, that enjoyments must be possessed or acquired, under the law of right, which pledges the individual to the devotion of his energies to a certain object; and to the restraint of his tendency to seize on, and appropriate, that whereon he bestowed no labour.

The fact that our prisons are not in a state of perfection, should not alter the tone of our feelings towards prisoners. They are not responsible for the faults of the institution; its faults only entitle them to a larger share of pity. If imprisonment make them worse, instead of better, the blame should not be visited on



them; they have, for that reason, stronger claim on us.

It becomes, more imperatively than ever, our duty to endeavour to repair the injury done them; and to try to make up to them the moral loss they have sustained. Outside the prison, before and after imprisonment, the criminal has a claim on us, which we cannot ignore. It is not practicable to reconstruct the whole prison system, all at once, on the Christian principle; but it is practicable to demonstrate what the principle is, by illustrating its application in individual cases; and if some desire be kindled to promote true Gospel action, in this branch of our public service, it will best manifest itself by endeavours to aid and befriend the subjects of its work.

It is not enough that we pray for "prisoners and captives;" we must visit them; and see whether their prison is such as Christ can approve—calculated to answer His purpose of love, their reconciliation to His most holy law.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Christian Prison.

#### WARD NO. I.

#### REFORMATORIES AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

Classification..Reformatory School's Act..The Presence of a Child  
..The Great Effort..The Unreclaimed District..Proportioned  
Fertility.."Be Good"..Poor Little Outsiders..Interest in the  
Movement.."Cannot be gotten for Gold"..Testimony of Vicious  
Pupils..A Baby Prisoner..The Advantages of the Connection..  
Influence of Love and Gratitude..Continental States Advanced..  
Mettray and Rauhe Haus Training-schools..Superior Moral  
Effort possible in Foreign Prisons.

TEN years ago, an Act of Parliament came into operation, which instituted the most important classification of criminals that could possibly be attempted. It provided for the separation of young offenders from old transgressors; and it specially contemplated the correction and training of juvenile criminals. This enactment rests on undoubted Christian authority; and deserves to be rated as the first step toward the formation of the

Christian prison. It stands at the head of all the rules that can be framed, for the management of imprisonment on Gospel principles; and it should engage the attention of all interested not only in prisons, but in the education of the lower classes.

Before the passing of the Reformatory Schools' Act, children convicted of crime, at any age, were sent to the common prisons; and they have there associated with mature malefactors. The consequence of this may be easily conceived. No better means could have been devised for realizing that evil communication is corrupting—that manners originally bad can be made worse; and slight tendencies to crime increased and confirmed. There are abundance of facts that prove the incarceration of the young with the old to have been one of the most fruitful sources of crime. The histories of many of our convicts show that they began their careers at a very early age; some at 8, 9, and 10 years; and that their first imprisonment was but a prelude to many subsequent ones, until the final stage of penal servitude made them a permanent burden to society.

Moral disease, like physical disease, is easiest checked when it is attacked in the early stages; and, in order to

treat it with any probability of success, the victim of it must be separated from the similarly affected. There is no disease so spreading as moral evil ; and, hence, the most rigorous distinction between those who exhibit it, in various forms, is absolutely indispensable to amendment. Age in years, age in guilt, disposition, habits, and proclivities, form grounds for classification ; and the strongest of these is that to which we are alluding, the separation of the child from the adult.

The principle of this is well established. All thoughtful, conscientious people, act on it ; and, indeed, some who are not, in other matters, particularly considerate, and whose morals are by no means irreproachable, in this act rightly enough, and avoid many things, in the presence of a child, which they would do, or say, elsewhere, without scruple. We have an instinctive regard for the pure time of life. Even the worst believe, that “it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”

In the better classes, intense anxiety is manifested on this subject. The preservation of the “little ones” is the grand object of their parental existence. Mothers and

fathers study it with all their powers; and, it must be confessed, that the very highest and greatest exercise of their intelligence sometimes fails to secure the freedom of their children, from manifestation of symptoms of the common disorder of human depravity. The great effort is to subdue these symptoms, to keep down the outburst of self-gratification, at the expense of others; and to form the character to act according to the laws that govern Christian living. This moral training, apart from religious exhortation, is invariably given, by all who educate their children on Christian principles; and, yet, many who are most strict in the practice of this course themselves, doubt the benefit of supplying this training to the criminal classes, either in youth or age. To them, they would give nothing but abstract religious instruction, forgetting that they use, in their own homes, with "line upon line, precept upon precept," daily, hourly, aye, momentarily, the practical force of moral instruction. With eye, hand, and tongue, it is continually being given to the children of the moral; and of its efficacy we have ample proof. There can be no question, then, as to the necessity of affording it to those who are destitute of it. It is better to bestow it late than never; and, on this

ground, at any time of life, it is to be attempted ; but the period at which it is peremptorily demanded is in childhood.

The legislature has given a good opportunity for doing this by the passing of the Reformatory Schools' Act.

Whenever a creature of tender age is convicted of a crime, instead of imprisonment among full-grown felons, he or she may be sent to a Reformatory, over the age of ten years ; and to an Industrial School, under that time of life, for a period of not less than two years, and not more than five ; during this time, to be subjected to the kind care and treatment of persons devoted to this service, from love to Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such are the kingdom of heaven." This love alone can lead people to take an interest in such work, with the knowledge that Jesus calls even criminal babes to His feet ; and wills their instruction in the "things that are able to make them wise unto salvation."

It is a known fact, that, in this professedly Christian land, there is a large number of children for whom no parents care ; and who are without home, and friends, untaught, unfed, unsheltered from the winter's storm, and from the

summer's heat, and exposed to all the physical distress, and moral mischief, that are driven from the dwellings of the better orders. These children wander, with vague purposes, in the wild space where want and selfishness run riot. The very wisest and best among us sometimes forget that there is in the country this great unreclaimed district of human sorrow; and that in it are swarms of children who are born in it; and who are, consequently, not responsible for being inhabitants of it. The phenomenon is that population increases in it more rapidly than elsewhere. The poor and vicious may be short-lived, but they are fertile. The dirtiest and most wretched places are usually most thickly crowded with the rising generation.

Lanes, courts, garrets, cellars, and streets, are replenished in a wonderful manner with inmates, who, as they go down in social gradation, rise in numerical proportions. In these, the infant criminal is propagated in proportions corresponding to the level of their sections. There has been enough said, sung, and published about them, to move the very stones of the streets to cry for help for them.

In the upper ranks of society no one expects a child to "be good," unless it is made to be so by a regular

process of some sort. Most people have an art of their own for doing this, of which they vaunt, and exhibit the results triumphantly, in "little dears" brought up to perfect manners and tempers. These wise folks talk of the "bad boys and girls of the town," and of the "wicked little roadside tramps ;" and rarely remember why these are so.

Poor little outsiders ! perhaps no mother carried them into Christ's house of prayer, nor offered them to His arms ; no father led them out to gaze, it may be, on the works of God, nor directed their young idea to the heavenly goal ! Most probably, they were virtually, if not nominally, orphans.

It devolves, then, on the State to stand *in loco parentis* ; and in 1854, when it took the solemn charge of children who had developed evil propensities, it assumed a most holy and Christian position. It must be carefully marked that the Government does not, in the least, attempt to supersede parental responsibility. The provisions of the Reformatory Act make it burdensome on parents who do not fulfil their natural obligation, to train their child to honest living ; for they are, under it, chargeable with the support of their child in the Reformatory, on the



just principle of making them pay a penalty for their neglect.

This legislation is sound ; and it is to be regretted that it is difficult to give it effect : “ The good or evil of the reformatory system hinges essentially on the steady enforcement of a fair and sufficient contribution from the parents of every child under detention.”—(*Report of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, page 13.*)

By this it would be made to act on both old and young ; and be thus a doubly active moral agency. But parents who are wicked enough to defraud their little ones of moral guidance, are not generally sufficiently conscientious to defray this debt ; and the enforcing of it is not always, therefore, practicable.

The cost of this effort to suppress juvenile crime comes, consequently, chiefly on the public, which supplies it in the form both of taxation and of benevolent donations. £9,607 6s. 4d. has been received by subscription and bequest in the year 1863-4, a sum which forms nearly one-tenth of the cost of this branch of the Christian prison, the whole expenditure on which amounted to £96,167 5s. 8d.

The amount of private contributions to this fund does

not adequately represent the interest of the Christian public in the movement. There is a greater demonstration of it in the fact, that every one of the reformatories throughout the kingdom, were founded by voluntary agency ; and that most, if not all of them, have gratuitous aid in the management of their establishments ; and much labour and wisdom bestowed on them, which “cannot be gotten for gold.” There are sixty-five of these schools ; and no small share of loving-kindness is testified in them to the lambs of Christ’s flock.

Beside these, there are 31 “Industrial Schools,” to which the youngest class of offenders is admissible, on their first conviction of crime. These are conducted on the same plan as the schools for culprits over ten, and under sixteen years of age ; and all that is said of one agency applies to the other.

Jointly they form Ward No 1. of our Christian prison. It is small as yet, far too small for the wants of those it is intended to benefit ; and it increases but slowly in dimensions.

At present, the effect of its action on the ready-made criminal mass is not evident ; but in the material from whence this is collected, there is a decided change. The

total number of known thieves, depredators, receivers of stolen goods, prostitutes, suspected persons, and vagrants under sixteen years of age, in 1864 was 9,173, while the average for the years 1858-59-60 was 18,250; since which date, a steady diminution has been perceptible in the judicial returns under this head.

This is evidence of a decided impression on the country; and it will, in time, be followed by a decrease of juvenile convictions. But this cannot take place until a greater number of these criminals are subjected to the new process.

In the past year, 8,857 children were convicted of crime; and of these only 1534 found their way into the reformatories. This is owing to two circumstances—a lingering distrust of their efficacy, on the part of the justices; and the want of a sufficient number of these schools. These impediments it would be desirable to remove; for, while they remain, the principle on which the moral scheme works cannot be truly tested.

While so few of the whole number of young criminals are confided to their care, they cannot be expected to perform any great service to the community. In indi-

vidual cases, they answer well, but as a public work they have, as yet, not had an opportunity of making a stand against crime. This should be taken into account in judging of their effects.

On the evidence of a few peculiarly vicious young people, objections have been entertained against these institutions ; but these cannot be considered sound. The testimony of pupils is not that on which we found our estimate of other kinds of schools, and there is no reason for making an exception in the case of those for criminals, but the reverse.

The Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools states, in his last annual Report, that a special difficulty is found in London, in promoting this effort to save children from the prison; and he says :—

The consequence is, that a large proportion of the disorderly and reckless boys who throng the railway stations, and hang about the crossings, are left at liberty to ply their trade of begging and petty pilfering till qualified to graduate as thieves and prepared for the gaol and the reformatory. The large number of juveniles committed to the London prisons is an impressive comment on the indifferent success of the Refuges and Ragged Schools of London, in coping with and preventing crime ; and the marked increase which I have noticed in the early part of this Report,

should lead the promoters of reformatory agency in the metropolis to consider the subject very much more deeply than they have heretofore done, dealing with it as a matter of public policy for the community at large, rather than as one of private benevolence.—*Report of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, page 17.*

The iniquity of sending young children to prison still prevails, notwithstanding the movement which is bravely contending with it. When the Police Reports, and the Criminal Courts' Reports, daily inform the public of infants of ten, nine, eight, seven years old and younger being condemned to imprisonment, few are able to realize what such a circumstance involves. The account of an eye-witness may serve to give an idea of it.

Not long ago, a lady visitor entered the female ward of a county gaol. Her attention was attracted by a little child who was crying convulsively; and whom the inmates were soothing and caressing, with every possible display of womanly kindness. They readily informed her that the baby was a fellow-prisoner, that it was six years old, and had been committed for theft!

The young offender was as fair and pretty a creature as any mother might be proud to own; but, alas! it had none to rejoice in its beauty. No loving tones had chid

the little naughty thing, no gentle touch had led it from its temptation. An upraised finger would have done it ; but that attractive magnet had not intervened ; and so cold iron was cast around the infant form, to repel its sinful propensities. It was cast into prison.

The very sound of such a fate has barbarism in it. If this were mentioned as a heathen act, the strong protest of indignant Christianity might have been heard above the assertion of usage, privilege, and law. But it was a common occurrence ; and had no novelty in it for any one who knew of it, except the prison-visitor ; and to her it was a sad revelation.

The effect on the child was just what might be naturally expected. The bars terrified her : the cold cells, the strange faces, the absence of friends, the unusual food, were, to the poor, weak, little one, as they would be to any child, most appalling. She fretted and sobbed incessantly. Her companions, some of the most degraded, criminal women in the country, did all that lay in their power to mitigate her sufferings, and tried their best to cheer her tender heart.

The immature mind had small perception of the cause

of what had befallen it ; and it strove in vain to conceive an answer to the question :

“ Why can I not go home ? ”

After a period of six weeks, during which the little one had become somewhat reconciled to its strange abode, and attached to its new friends, it was mercifully removed to an Industrial School ; and the child is still under the charge of this Christian Institution.

It is to be hoped that under fostering care, the girl will grow up an honest woman ; and should she do so, it will not be owing to the inhuman chastisement that visited her earliest transgression.

The story of this child has some peculiar features ; and they will serve to illustrate a point, which it is desirable to bring forward. She was a destitute orphan, whom some wealthy ladies, of high position, and well-known piety, took into their house ; and whom they proposed to rear as a domestic servant, and to train “ in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Their intention did honour to their Christian character ; but the mode of its fulfilment strangely corresponds with their reputed wisdom and charity.

They had taken M. B., a baby, and had had her



nursed, and brought up in their household. She had no memory of any other home than their luxurious mansion; and had no idea of any state unconnected with plenty, comfort, happiness, and kindness. There had been no privations in her lot, which was almost that of a child born to the privileges of the upper classes. The circumstances of her crime did not alter her position with regard to those who had adopted her; and it was their duty to have given her all the advantages of the connection. Within its scope, there surely should have been found, some means of treating the transgressions of so young a sinner. It was a strange misconception of the place of the prison in the social scheme, that led to the act of incarcerating the child. No institution is intended to supersede that of which they ought to have been in possession—a home containing all the needful means of teaching and maintaining moral discipline among its members. In that household full of women the mother-heart was dead, or the mother-head was most woefully misinstructed.

The occurrence was one which might have called forth many Christian virtues, instead of which it betrayed their absence, and the absence also of that knowledge of how



to do the will of Christ, which His followers are bound to add to their faith.

The story of the infant's sin is very simple. It had happened that a wedding was to take place in the family; and that the house became the scene of preparations for it, which brought fresh and exciting circumstances before the undeveloped sense of M. B. She was, be it remembered, only six years old. New things were continually coming in for the approaching festivity; pretty ornaments were scattered about; the child handled them; and played with the precious articles. She coveted some particular things, that charmed her dawning fancy. Articles of jewellery were missed. M. B. had stolen them. The gewgaws were found where she had hidden them. The babe was declared a full-grown thief! She was prosecuted, and convicted, and imprisoned.

Happily, the first ward of the Gospel prison was in existence, and the juvenile criminal was permitted to pass into it; else, where would now have been the poor orphan girl? Prison friendships might have been pursued; and, ere this, have worked her ruin. She was wax within the grasp of those who embraced her, in her hours of trouble, in the gaol. Her love and

gratitude would have been easily won ; and, through them, she might have been the victim of the worst lusts. Through the interposition of the reformatory agency, this mischief has been averted. The love and gratitude of the child now lead to virtue ; and M. B. bids fair to be a credit to the system.

Many instances of the benefit it has conveyed to individuals could be adduced ; and an interesting volume might be filled with such cases, if it were judicious to publish notices of the kind ; but it would be as indiscreet a proceeding to do so, as it would be injurious to to give biographical sketches, of the many persons whose lives have included a criminal interlude ; and who have succeeded in gaining a respectable footing in moral society.

This sort of evidence may be necessary to a certain class of the public ; but the thoughtful will not require further witness than that which is supplied to the Government in the official Reports. The Rev. Sydney Turner says :—

On examining the figures of this return it will be seen that the proportion of those known to be doing well to the number discharged is for both boys and girls just about 60 per cent. ; that of the unknown, for boys 21, for girls, 15 per cent. ; that of the doubtful or re-convicted, who

may fairly be classed together as cases of failure, or relapse, something over 16 per cent. (16·4) for boys, and a little over 22 per cent (22·1) for girls.

On comparing these returns with those for the previous year, it will be found that the proportions of those doing well, unknown, &c., to the whole, are just about the same. Those of the boys are about two per cent., and those of the girls about six per cent. more favourable. If, as in former estimates, I divide the " unknown " equally between the doing well on the one hand, and the doubtful or relapsed on the other, the same result comes out as I have found in preceding years, viz., that about *seventy per cent.* of those who are brought under reformatory training are permanently rescued or improved by its influence.

The returns from the prisons are, as before, very favourable. During the year ending December 31st, 1864, 226 boys and 20 girls were recognized in English or Welsh gaols as having been in reformatory schools. The total numbers discharged from the English and Welsh reformatories in the 3½ years ending June 30, 1864, (exclusive of emigrants sent out to the colonies,) was just about 2,100 boys and 560 girls; figures which give a per-centage of reconviction as thus tested of nearly eleven (10·7) per cent, for boys, and over three (3·5) per cent. for girls.—*Reports of Reformatory and Industrial Schools*, pages 7, 8.

In the prisons of Continental States, the reformatory principles have been some time in operation. At Kaiserslauten, they have reduced reconvictions to seven per cent., and at Munich to ten. Their success has,

at Valencia, and in Ireland, established the credit of the system of "marks," which forms a part of their details. This system, on a plan similar to that of Captain Machonochie, of Norfolk Island celebrity, has recently been introduced into the English convict prisons; and, as the first step to a new treatment of criminals, it is a movement of great promise.

Foreign modes of action can rarely be imported, but there are features in the reformatories at Mettray, and at Rauhe Haus, which might be judiciously imitated in this country.

One of these is the use made of them, in constituting them training-schools for prison officials. The importance of procuring a trained body for this service, has not yet been impressed on the legislature of this country. As it proceeds in reformatory action, the necessity for this will be increasingly apparent. The value of the practical instruction obtained at the Rauhe Haus, is evident in the superior moral effort, of which the prisons, that employ its pupils are capable. It might be difficult, but it would be by no means impossible, to pursue a similar course of preparation in England, for work, which differs from all other, in its special nature, and peculiar difficulty.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The Cycle of Crime.*

Mapped Orbit..Reversed Action..Crime's First Phase..Dimensions of the Phases..Within our Horizon..Distressing Cognomen..A Rectified Growth..The Midnight of Crime.."Years of Discretion"..The Age of Will..The Doings of Will..Ghastly Spectacles..Local Influences..Occupation and "no Occupation"  
.."By all means to save some"..Attention and Endeavour.

So many facts have been ascertained concerning the progress of crime, and its connections with the ages, and circumstances of its victims, that it may be now fairly asserted to have a cycle; and its orbit may be mapped and observed, with almost certainty.

The grand achievement of finally checking its course, and putting an end to its motion, is not what any one dreams of. Of this work we may not speak. It cannot be done by man. In the individual, or in the race, it is the work of God, Himself; and is beyond our comprehension, and above our speculation.

We merely alluded to this work, in an early chapter

when we mentioned prison conversions. They, in their rarity and beauty, present the only instances of crime really stayed, in its progress, and its circular action reversed.

The moral effort is but an attempt to meet the great whirling body, as it rolls round and round on its axis, and speeds on its circuitous path, encircling earth in its hideous outline.

Crime, in its first phase, as it appears among children, waxes with a steady progress; and the action with regard to it, of which we treated in the foregoing chapter, is one of great importance. The reformatory agency has an advantage over it, at that age, which can never afterwards be secured. It may, then, withdraw on the easiest terms many an item that might swell the bulk of the next, and climacteric stage of the burdensome satellite, which as inevitably attends the earth as her fair consort, the calm queen of the night.

The prevention of the culmination of evil, by interfering with the tendency of vice to centralize, and to congregate bad propensities, is of much consequence; for these, in their climax, impart polarization to the darkness of crime; and form the monster from which the world

cries for deliverance. To distribute the particles of this mass, so as to lighten its pressure on our social framework, by the equalization of its weight, is a legitimate human effort.

In the Christian prison of which we have treated, we hope that great things, towards the accomplishment of this end, may be done ; and, in order to estimate what these may be, it is well to glance at the dimensions of the phases of crime, in relation to each other ; and see the first, second, and third, exhibiting their proportions.

Last year, the early period was represented by  
1,152 criminals under 12 years of age.

7,305	„	16	„
25,272	„	21	„

The second, and middle time brought up the frightful figure to 42, 174 persons under 30 years old ; and then begun the waning of the gloomy scene, as, tapering down from 24,904 under the age of 40 ; 15,115 under 50 ; 6,551 under 60, to 3,267, and 866 in the far-off verge of vanishing life, it was lost to human sight.

It remains for us to look at, and to deal with, the matter as it comes within our horizon ; and the discovery that



breaks on us with its dawning, naturally strikes us first, and with greatest force.

Who is not touched at the manifestation of crime in childhood? The sight of little ones gathered together by the law, instead of the voice of family affection, and sheltered in a substitutionary "Home," where the ties of kindred are broken, with the cognomen "offenders" added to the name sacred to Christ's love, and to that of the father, whom they should honour, would be sadly distressing, if it were not cheered by the hope of their salvation, from the thicker gloom of full-grown, cherished sin—from the fate of the outcast, and the name of the "convict."

The large numbers snatched from this dark state, and distressing denomination, and ushered into a brighter sphere, by the school-imprisonment of children, gives the country a rectified growth of a very valuable character. Seventy youths out of every hundred, who enter this division of the Christian prison, go forth reformed; and it is trusted also endowed with the fervour of new converts, valiant to insist on that honesty and truth in others, the value of which they have learned themselves. But of the residue what



shall we say? Alas! it passes into the shade of the coming phase, and forms the nucleus of its darkest depth.

Between the age of 21 and 30 years lies the great season of crime. Then all that has remained unchecked in childhood, gets its development; and a body of culprits "to the manner born" is found, which joins itself to a host, whose crime-life but begins at the time when passions are full, strength greatest, purposes young, and mind energetic. These unite to form the zenith—the midnight—of crime.

The majority of prisoners are what is called "in the flower of their age"—"the prime of life"—"the years of discretion." In other circumstances, this period rates at a high value. In prison its worth is small. It conveys no advantage to the man over the child. No greater number of adults become morally enlightened than of children. The proportions are in favour of the latter; for the mass of guilt which provides the figure with its hard, stolid, central block of crimes is formed by the repeated offences of those who have passed their nonage, and entered on man's estate. Of these, 3,975 re-appear above ten times in

prison ; and they contrast remarkably with 18,603, who only once stand in the ranks of the criminal.

Statistics are not very clear on this matter, but it may be asserted, that it is just at the most effective time of a man or woman's life, that crime is most exhibited. Criminals seem to have no "years of discretion." The time so named in others, in them may be called the Age of Will. With Will they oppose discretion. It is their law ; and we cannot overrate the power it wields, nor the difficulty of interfering with it.

The potency and the working of this force are curious and complex ; and they are only seen when it has conquered all that is due to others, and sways its possessor to live for self-gratification alone. This Will is the root of crime ; and with it all effort for its suppression has to deal. It is of no use to confront it with the infliction of physical torture. The iron stubbornness of the "I will" cannot be assailed by such means. It is able to encounter the greatest amount of bodily agony, privation, and distress. It resolves to submit in order that it may accomplish its design, after all is done that can be done corporeally to prevent its movements.

No one who reads the daily prints can doubt that men are capable of this, and women too. Numerous instances are furnished to us every day, of persons undergoing hardships the most severe and degrading, without being, in the least, morally benefited. They remain as wickedly determined as ever to commit crime; and there are no instances that can be produced of this Will being conquered by these external means. Unbroken by present suffering, and unbent by the prospect of future torture, it can brave death—aye, and kill itself in blind  
ance of all consequences. It nerves the suicide to dare his fate, enables him to trample down faith, forget hope, resist charity, and desperately plunge into perdition.

“Conscience, which makes cowards of us all,” is vanquished by it, and the cycle of crime tells the tale of this battle. It begins in early life, and then the strife is noisy. The sound is often in the air, and strikes on every ear; wherever children congregate, it is heard in the plainest words; but the familiar phraseology passes unnoticed, although it may announce a tendency of the darkest character.

In the next stage the struggle is invisible, and silent,

but it is there. "The tug of war" is come. Unlawful self-indulgence is obtained, in spite of many a prick and dart from within; but the Will gains the victory; and it rolls along triumphantly, bearing its spoils into a horrible abyss—the Man in his best years.

As age advances, the tyrant loosens his grasp. Experience teaches even fools; and, at length, the Will listens to reason. With desire enfeebled, the elders decline the combat, and retire from a field where all for which they fought, has been ignominiously lost. The old rarely commit crime. Some few may be seen in prisons; and they are ghastly spectacles, indeed. The gaunt shadows of the demon Will, linger round them, and its malefic power is pursuing them to the last.

Crime, in its cycle, has other influences beside age; locality, and occupations affect it.

It prevails differently in different districts, as the following table shows:—

The crimes committed last year, amounted to,

In the Metropolis	-	-	-	-	13,529
„ Pleasure Towns	-	-	-	-	666
„ Towns depending upon Agricultural Districts	-				396
„ Commercial Ports	-	-	-	-	5,282
„ Seats of the Cotton and Linen Manufacture	-				8,861

In the Seats of the Woollen and Worsted Manufacture -	1,272
„ Seats of the Small and Mixed Textile Fabrics -	619
„ Seats of the Hardware Manufacture -	1,272
„ Eastern Counties -	1,463
„ South and South-Western Counties -	1,259
„ Midland Counties -	1,225

In employments crime also exercises a selection, and it is modified by them, as well as by the other circumstances, to which we have alluded. Occupations, and "no occupation" qualify it curiously; and the varying sorts of these have their peculiar effect, according to laws as occult as those that govern all the differences of species, tribes, and families that are displayed in the kingdom of nature.

Last year the criminals were thus returned :—

21,949	-	No occupation
4,305	-	Domestic servants
59,887	-	Labourers, charwomen, needlewomen
6,485	-	Factory workers
23,847	-	Mechanics and skilled workers
137	-	Foremen and overlookers of labour
1,558	-	Shopmen, shopwomen, clerks, &c.
3,716	-	Shopkeepers and dealers
233	-	Professional employments
3,937	-	Sailors, mariners, soldiers
952	-	Occupations not ascertained

From the materials which we have collected may be constructed the cycle of crime ; its shape and form ascertained, its gravity and its motion calculated.

Our utmost strain of intellect may not prevail to lighten its ponderance, to change its course, nor to stay its progress ; it may go on to the last, working destruction and misery ; but its deadly operation is not inevitable as regards individuals. These, at all ages, in all places, under all circumstances, may possibly “be plucked as brands from the burning.”

The cycle may continue uninterruptedly ; but they can be rescued. It may resist all attempts to arrest its progress ; but there is no law to prevent the removal of its victims from its control. Our work, as Christians, is to draw them out of the revolving circles, whenever an opportunity offers, and, “by all means, to save some.” The body may replenish, and sustain its constitution and vitality, the criminal, like the poor, shall be ever with us ; but speculations on the increase or decrease of the class do not affect our duty with regard to its members.

The utility of examining the cycle of crime is merely that we may derive instruction, as to where and how our business with, and for prisoners may be done. It is

important to know the secrets of their nature, temper, and habits, as revealed in the statements to which we have access, concerning their age and persistence in guilt. These points must guide our efforts to aid them.

The slight sketch here given, is intended to suggest thought on the subject, and to interest rather than to inform.

The more consideration the matter obtains, the more obvious it will be, that practical acquaintance with it can only be acquired by experiment; and that to pursue this beneficially, the state and the wants of a special class should be the object of distinct attention and endeavour.

In order to provide an opportunity of attempting this, we shall take the case of criminal women, and examine it separately, in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Female Prisoners and their Difficulties.

Repugnance of Good Women to Bad..Shocking Tales..One of the Worst Cases..A Fair Account..Human Uprightness and Amiability not Objectionable..Conversion not Superseded..Peculiar Influence..Transformation..Symptom of Disease..Women's Organization..Brutalizing Treatment..Female Criminals fewer than Male..Their Crimes Different.."No Occupation"..The Judicial Catalogue..Petty Thefts..Foundation of Female Dignity..A New Trial..Conversations with Peter..Provision against Immorality..Conviction..Characteristic Concealment..Sensations Personal..Ladies' Duty..Discrimination and Guidance..The "Cloak"..Restored Cases..Supervision Circle..Dangerous Familiarity with Scripture..Delusion..Distorted Minds.

THE difficulty of interesting good women in the circumstances of the criminal members of their own sex is very great. There is a strong repugnance to having anything to do with them, which stretches even to an objection to know anything about them; and we cannot be surprised at this, because the details that are, from time to time, published concerning them, are calculated to convey a very disagreeable and revolting impression to virtuous minds.



Tales like the following are very shocking ; and they have produced a discouraging effect on all effort for these unhappy people :—

Mrs. Howe, warder of the House of Correction, Westminster, detailed the following history of the prisoner, Ann Smith. She was sentenced to two calendar months' imprisonment, for assaulting the master and matron of St. Giles's Workhouse and inflicting grievous bodily harm, at Bow-street Police Court, 20th September, 1855. While she was undergoing that imprisonment her behaviour was very violent. Because a female warder offended her in some way, she seized hold of her thumb and put it in her mouth and nearly bit it through. The blood from the warder's thumb turned her sick and she let go her hold, or she would have bitten the thumb off. For that offence she was brought before the visiting justices of the prison, and adjudged to be further imprisoned for the space of six months, with hard labour. While serving that sentence she violently assaulted her (Mrs. Howe), scratched her face, and tore several handfuls of hair from her head, and was very troublesome in prison. She was again brought before the prison authorities, and sentenced to one month's imprisonment and twenty days' solitary confinement. These repeated punishments did not appear to have had any salutary effect upon her, for in 1857 a police-constable heard a disturbance in Drury-lane, and upon going up found the prisoner, and several others, tormenting a poor idiot boy. The constable in a very humane manner took the imbecile from their clutches, and had him conveyed to the workhouse. The prisoner waited for the constable, and went slyly up to him and stabbed him in

the neck with a penknife several times, and also scratched his face with the knife, and from those injuries the constable nearly lost his life. The prisoner was taken before a magistrate, and was obliged to be handcuffed during the examination, and committed for trial. She was tried and found guilty at the Central Criminal Court, and sentenced to be kept in penal servitude for ten years. While she was serving that sentence she gave the prison authorities a great deal of trouble, in consequence of her very violent disposition.

The matron of Brixton Prison said the prisoner was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for an assault, in addition to what had been already proved against her. Her conduct in prison was bad and refractory.

The prisoner, during this evidence, behaved in the most unbecoming manner, sneering at and interrupting the witnesses, and was requested over and over again to be quiet. To this she replied with an oath. She said to the witness Howe, "Only wait, Mrs. Howe, until I get you at Westminster. I will give your head such a dashing against the wall."

A NOTORIOUS CHARACTER.—At the Worship-street Police-court, London, on Monday, Elizabeth Durant, a woman of middle age, was charged before Mr. Cooke with wilful damage and assaults on the police. The prisoner's sister, who is a small shopkeeper in Bethnal-green, having stated that yesterday afternoon she was compelled to give her into custody for demolishing five panes of glass in her window without the slightest provocation, Mr. Cooke asked—Is this woman known? Prisoner—Oh, yes; I've been here a million times. I know you very well. You are a respectable gentleman. Horn, 242

K, said—Yesterday, about three o'clock, the prisoner was given into my custody for wilful damage. She was quite sober, but fearfully violent. She flung a gingerbeer bottle at me, struck me, and tore my coat, rolled herself in the mud, and it required seven constables to convey her on the stretcher to Bethnal-green station-house, where directly she was released she tore every garment from her person, and could not be prevented. Chadwick, 350 K, said—I went to my brother officer's assistance. Knowing her desperate character, she was not left alone the whole night. Prisoner here uttered the most horrible language, and called her sister the vilest names. When tired of this, the constable under examination stated that she at the time in question had an infant about three months old in her arms, which she actually flung at them, but it was uninjured, in consequence of a gentleman who was looking on providentially catching it. The person was not present, but the child, who was in the arms of an officer, looked more dead than alive. After some further evidence as to the horrible habits and character of this wretched creature, Mr. Cooke said—I shall send you to prison. Prisoner (interrupting)—I'll tear up my things, if you do. Mr. Cooke—For one month on each charge of assault. Prisoner instantly endeavoured to keep her word, and had partly divested herself of the fresh habiliments which had, per necessity, been supplied to her, before she could be stayed. Bendall, the gaoler, at length got her into the court-yard, but not without assistance, where she again gave utterance to yells and curses. Immediately she was placed in a cell the gaoler informed Mr. Cooke that she had twice rapidly tried to strangle herself with her garters, that she used such force to accomplish the

act that she rendered her features black in an instant, and that had he not been present she must have died. He was compelled to bring her from the cell, and she was lying on the stones of the court-yard. At this moment threats and curses of the same shocking nature as had before been heard burst upon the ears of those in court, and it became necessary to handcuff her and send her in a cab to the prison. The infant was removed to the workhouse.

Similar narratives frequently come before the public. The histories of women who lead lives of horrible crime, suffer frequent imprisonments, and are known to be determined to continue in sin of an aggravated character, are those that are most familiar to the public. They obtain a terrible notoriety, through the deplorable fact, that even such "sensation" as they supply is popular. In order to pander to the depraved taste for this kind of news, the daily papers make the most of every case out of which anything of the sort can be produced; and by this means, a very exaggerated idea of the whole class of female prisoners has been set afloat.

It cannot be denied that there are some among them, whose conduct may have given grounds for the descriptions that have been circulated—descriptions that seem to be applicable only to fiends; and that can scarcely

be credited to belong to anything human. *The Prison Matron*, a book purporting to depict the interior of our most important female prison, ran in the same groove ; and it has helped to deepen the aversion to the unfortunate convict woman.

Neither this book, nor the newspaper statements, give a fair account of criminal women, because they single out individuals, and present them as types of the whole body ; while those that they select are really only extreme cases, of a peculiar character, which is confined to a very small section of the number. The consequence of propagating a false impression about these women is, that the difficulty of assisting the deserving among them, has greatly increased. This is felt by those who interest themselves in efforts to benefit them ; and it is, therefore, desirable that some explanation should be rendered, that may serve to clear away the injurious misconception that exists.

Matters connected with them are bad enough, but they are not in the irremediable state that seems to be popularly supposed.

As we stated in our opening chapters, religious work does not prosper in prisons, nor generally among the

criminal women class outside ; and, because this is the case, religious people rarely think of attempting to improve their morals, and manners. It is wrong to believe that this is entirely impossible, for many instances can be given of women who have “ceased to do evil,” in the sense of outward offence ; and these should not be despised, nor the principle on which they are reformed rejected.

For many years, we have been convinced that it was our duty to promote moral effort among women in prison ; and to value it in them, as we do in others. This effort, which is but another name for the self-restraint that is exercised by many, who make no profession whatever of religious feeling, and whose conduct and character commands our respect, for just what it is—human uprightness and amiability—can never be objectionable. If poor women, who have committed crime, and tasted its ill consequences, can be induced to try to live in a better way, it should be an interesting task to aid them, and so far from its being avoided by Christian ladies, ought to be sought by them. Indeed, we are satisfied that it would be, if they could only be assured that it was practicable.

Facts attest that it is ; and if it were as prudent, as it would be triumphant, to relate the details of cases in which success has been attained, we could give very powerful evidence in support of the assertion.

Now, it must be clearly understood, that this is no attempt to supersede evangelical teaching and exhortation with regard to spiritual concerns ; nor is it a proposal to suspend energetic endeavour to procure conversion. It is rather for the purpose of encouraging the secondary work of moral effort, to be done at the same time with the primary, and side by side with it ; and to urge on Christians its prosecution, with some degree of activity.

This never can be done while so strong an opinion prevails, as is known to be generally entertained among them, that these women never do, and never can, become moral, unless they are converted, and come under the power of religion. This is so far from being the case, that it can be proved, that the majority of those who “go and sin openly no more ;” and who do not re-appear in prison several times, but rejoin the ranks of the well-conducted, do so on the mere ground of worldly policy, and not from a sense of obligation to the Saviour, and desire to serve and please Him. It is also some-



what remarkable, that the small number who really enter into this new relation and covenant with God, are usually from among the very worst subdivision of the criminal class.

Those whose violent and desperate conduct places them beyond the pale of all human agency, seem to be the very instances in which the Holy Spirit most frequently shows His power. The cases we referred to elsewhere, and all the others that we have known, with many of those we have heard, have been of this kind. Their reception of the Christian appeal to the sinner's feelings confirms the words of our Lord, "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." They are the truly miserable and sin-sick to whom His gracious words come with force. When they, in their quick, excitable temperament, are touched by remorse, and stung by memory, conjured up by some, it may be inadvertent, word that reaches a tender spot in their sensibilities, no description of people are so susceptible, nor are any other converts more steady or earnest in their after-lives. But this is a matter which cannot be calculated on ; though it may be looked for, prayed for, and every means used that could conduce to it.



While such blessing is the object of hope, there are advantages to be derived from moral treatment that have been effective even in these extreme circumstances.

A Justice was recently visiting a prison, when some well-known and very refractory women were being committed. They immediately commenced their usual bad conduct, and exhibited an extraordinary amount of wickedness. He was proceeding to give the customary directions for their treatment, when a lady, who had been visiting in the wards of the establishment, and was about to leave, approached the gate, near which the fierce group was gathered. She was known to most of its constituents, who had been frequently in the same prison, and had often been addressed by her, in the persuasive tones of Christian love. The sight of her was magical, on this occasion. The voices that had been hoarse with screaming were silent, and only a whisper was heard among them, to the effect, that they would “give in until ——was gone.”

Perceiving the effect of her presence, the lady asked leave to speak to them ; and, with very few words, beyond a request to them to be quiet and obedient, urged with a modest reason or two, she induced them to submit to the discipline of the occasion.

The magistrate, whose function was thus superseded, went, in a few days, to ascertain the result of this intervention ; and learned that none of them had “broken out,” and that their kind friend had paid them a daily visit, and had managed to maintain her control over them.

This lady’s evidence is, that, on this, and all other like occasions, she used very gentle, but very plain language, with these viragos ; and that she has generally had full sway over them ; and that there has been not only respectful demeanour to her face, but in her absence, under the impression of her instruction.

This influence operated on a symptom of a disease ; and it had a certain amount of success. The value of this success does not lie in the transient benefit, but in the clue given to the seat of the disorder. The manifestation to which the remedy was applied by the lady is a mere paroxysm, an attack dependent on a state of vice, which is discernible on the easiest investigation, and manageable by a continued system of moral control. It is a condition that ought to be, by this time, thoroughly understood by those whose duty it is to deal with persons affected by it.

The peculiarities of women’s organization must be

taken into account, in every consideration of the nature and circumstances of their lives; and in relation to their crimes more than in any other case connected with them.

The strange, subtle associations of their nervous system, with its irritative, excitable action—their weak muscular development—their circulation easily disturbed—the centre of their sensation trembling on a pivot, the balance of which the slightest hair's weight can move—are all so many forces in aid of the rule of morality. Under right direction they cease to be dangerous, and become the seat of a protective power. The slightness of the influence that serves to turn women one way or the other, makes it doubly interesting to find out that which shall the most surely and steadily induce them to maintain a state of propriety.

Prison-treatment, so far from having this effect, at present may be fairly accused of promoting the evil. The punishments of women by irons and handcuffs have increased during the past year\*; and it is brutalizing and disgraceful, that men in this advanced

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\* *Jud. Stat.* page 34.

age of intelligence should bring physical strength, instead of moral effort to their aid.

It is a grave mistake to suppose that but bodily coercion is practicable in this case ; but it is a mistake with which it is very difficult to deal. It rests on a prevalent notion of female incapability, which, while it is perfectly true in other respects, is wrong as regards morals. In this matter, facts are all in their favour. While they exceed men in number in the population, there are two-thirds more male criminals than female ; and the nature of the offences that women commit differ materially from those of men. The vast majority of women resist the self-indulgence of crime, and lead lives of sacrifice and restraint. There is, truly, a great power in them to do this ; and when a loss of this power is betrayed, the cause may be generally seen in the social circumstances and other collateral matters relating to the offender.

Under the heading, “ No occupation,” in the account of the various states of life from which malefactors come, the history of much of the sin into which women fall might be written.\* Forty-six per cent. of those who get into prison are from this great division of the community ; and the dispersion of it is an effort that must accompany

any attempt, to improve the moral condition of criminal women. Next to the idle come the over-worked, poor needlewomen, &c. Twenty-nine per cent. of these break down under their temptations. Few domestic servants, and less still from higher employments, are named in the judicial catalogue.

Women's offences are chiefly petty thefts ; and they indicate the existence of a great amount of real, and of some artificial wants. A habit of picking and stealing in the low trading class, and a desire to gratify a love of dress in the better placed, urges to the robberies of which they are convicted ; and then come the acts of passion to which drink and bad-temper incite them. The latter form an awful array of transgressions against feminine virtues ; and are the crimes that give the prisoner class their peculiar character. Dishonesty is almost overlooked in them in comparison with other immoralities. The well-known strength of the restraints that they over-leap, in order to commit the other class of offences is the foundation of a condemnation, on the part of the virtuous of their own sex, which is due to a sense of offended dignity, as well as to a respect for the law that is broken. This raises a barrier against the

re-admittance of the guilty to social equality, which is a legitimate defence for the innocent members of the community.

The charity which accords them a new trial is quite another thing. There is a warrant for opening the door to the criminal again, and again, after every conviction. Whatever may be the result of the action, it is, at least, a fulfilment of the law of Christ. He gave us a rule to guide our conduct with regard to this class, in the memorable conversation with Peter: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Our social duties to offenders of every sort are defined there very distinctly. The "sister" is not excepted. Her very weakness adds a plea; but it is meaningless beside the sublime motive supplied in the common prayer of Christendom, and in the Apostle's words: "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The teaching of Jesus in this case requires some study. It points to other considerations as well as to forgiveness. It implies that the offender is to be convicted.

This is the office of governmental justice, which is not to be frustrated ; and with which there is to be co-operation, on the part of society ; and, having performed this, the second direction regards the use of the quality of mercy.

Very full and most interesting suggestions are given by our Lord in a previous lesson, to which it is useful to refer. Matthew v., from the 38th to the 48th verse, contains minute instructions applicable to this case. One of the rules laid down specially shows how much must be done, in order to observe the spirit of the Saviour's law, and to carry into effect its gracious intentions towards transgressors. The seventy-sevenfold offender is not to be merely suffered ; and repeated injuries are not to remain simply unavenged. There is to be an effort made to prevent the recurrence of sin : " If a man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." This binds us to make provision against further immorality. It means that we are not only to protect ourselves from future encroachment on the part of the unjust, but that the depredator is to be given " the cloak," or whatever it may be, that will thoroughly supply his craving ; and this is to be done cheerfully—



as a gift—"not grudgingly nor of necessity, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

This treatment, akin to that which heaps coals of fire on an enemy's head, is very different from what is usually accorded to criminals by us. Our habits are at direct variance with our Lord's directions in the matter. To go no farther than the case of the domestic servant, who on suspicion is frequently dismissed, and not convicted. Conviction, the first duty, is often avoided, the trouble and disagreeability of it forming excuses. These futile reasons, it is to be feared, sometimes hide the real dread that is commonly entertained of the process of truth finding, which is shunned as a test of verbal accuracy, in a manner discreditable to those who range, in popular estimation, high above the despised criminal ranks.

The practice of not verifying suspicions is most pernicious. It fosters them in the mind in which they originate, and they operate unfairly on the object of them. Few see the importance of conviction, and, therefore, it is a neglected act. Many positively believe it to be unchristian; and under this impression decline to



perform it. This mistake is corrected by the instructions in the passage to which we have referred ; and it would be well to take its lesson as the basis of our proceedings with regard to those women with whom we come in contact, who give us reason to doubt their honesty. It is thoroughly Christian to make sure of the offence, and not to rest suspecting and imagining it ; for it is the only way in which we can practice forgiveness and moral suasion. This course does not imply that we are instantly to institute criminal proceedings in each case, in which we have doubts as to moral conduct ; on the contrary, it should lead to the weighing carefully of these doubts ; and to the avoidance of such risk as that of being convicted in turn, of a breach of the greatest law of all, the sacred commandment of charity.

In the case of the female prisoner, all this most difficult part of the work is done. The woman is convicted. Those who desire to engage in the Christian work of helping her, have only to discover the nature of her crime, and to study her character. In this great thoroughness of action is required ; and it is seldom faithfully undertaken. Without the most particular individualization, it is

impossible to do it ; and in order to carry this out, it is indispensable that an agency should be fitted to come into close contact with the criminal.

This is the only way to affect women's minds. They do not naturally recognise themselves as part of any mass that may be addressed. All their sensations are individual and special, never general and diffuse. That which they receive as an influence must be directed personally to each one, or they will neither understand nor admit it. To reach them successfully, their characteristic concealment must be carefully approached, and truth and candour earnestly sought. All the modes used for dealing with such women should promote the exhibition of these. It is worth any trouble to secure them, for having done so, all further effort to comprehend the case and to aid it will be easy.

Women, who have any desire to do well, do not withhold this confidence ; and when it is gained, half the battle is done with their criminal tendencies.

Societies which propose to aid female prisoners can only be efficacious, in so far as they to perform this close personal service.

It is greatly to be deplored that too few among

orthodox Christian ladies engage themselves in this way. No work so peculiarly demands their labour. Its requirements are just those which they are specially able to supply. They are naturally appointed to deal with the crime of their own section of the community ; and whenever they do so, their effort is eminently productive of good.

Some of them who give themselves up to prison-visiting ; and to the aid of female prisoners on discharge, find, that to accomplish any beneficial result, there is much absorption of their faculties. The labour is exacting. Once a case is really taken in hand, it must be pursued ; and the progress of it is attended generally with several processes. The responsibility attached to the duty undertaken is great. It involves all the pains that can be taken to secure the moral improvement of the criminal ; and this brings with it numerous considerations. The difficulty of finding employment, situations, and associations, in which the smallest amount of moral risk may be encountered, is only known to those who try to render such assistance to the ex-prisoner woman. She might be easily placed, if it were wise to suffer her to wander through society, without discrimination and guidance.

Failure in attending to this matter occasions many a reconviction; and leaves the object of intended help as ill off as if no such advantage were proposed. Careful selection of circumstances, for those of the class who crave such assistance, may be the giving of the "cloak," in the truest possible sense.

It is intensely interesting to observe how efforts progress towards this end. Sometimes, it is difficult to find anything to suit, though we seek it with all our skill. Occasionally, the mythic raiment is unsearchable; and never comes to hand; but leaves the wandering mind, to go back to its sin. Under such disappointment it is a comfort to think that we have looked for the "cloak," and that it is not our fault, if it has not been found. In case of its not fitting and not being accepted, it is equally happy, when we can record that we have, at least, offered it. All that this implies has to be encountered in trying to engage in this branch<sup>3</sup> of the sixth work; and it requires an amount of endurance and self-control, which no other duty demands. The effort to believe that there is, in most cases, "a cloak," is the first great difficulty to get over. The next step is to bring to the culprit that which shall be as a "cloak" to her, and afford

her such relief and help as it expresses ; but the means of attempting this are necessarily various and peculiar. It is not possible to give any regular account of them ; but a few cases may illustrate some of the *modus operandi* of the proceeding.

A. T., had passed a long imprisonment with great credit ; and at the end of it manifested great anxiety about her future life ; and entreated help, in the most earnest manner. Her strongly expressed determination to avoid crime was affecting. It was not mingled with any profession of religious feeling but merely declared her aversion to the deeds of sin, in which she had been engaged, previous to her detection ; and her intense dislike to the association, and companionship, into which they had introduced her. She was a married woman ; and the crime for which she was suffering had been committed at the instigation of her husband, who had contrived to elude the pursuit of justice. Her dread of encountering him was the most distressing exhibition of horror, and revolted feeling that could be described. In several interviews, she expressed this so genuinely, that it excited the deepest sympathy ; and she was promised aid in avoiding him.

She had been a housemaid, in a gentleman's family ; and had borne a good character previous to her marriage. There was some difficulty in procuring a situation for her, for the whole of her tale had to be told, in order to secure for her the kind interest of a Christian employer. One such, however, offered ; and arrangements were made to convey her to the house, in which there was a prospect of a suitable asylum, so long as she should remain unmolested by the man whose interference she so greatly apprehended.

She had not been a week in her new situation before he made his appearance, enforced his right, and carried her away. She has since been found living in one of the worst localities in London ; and was visited by a missionary, who devotes herself to such work, and the circumstances in which she is living are pitiable in the extreme. Her husband is a dealer in stolen goods ; and she is compulsorily employed assisting him, in his trade. She may be seen from time to time, and urged to try and keep from crime, but is it not asking the impossible ? It is well to find her still open to feeling on the subject ; and awake to the evil with which she is surrounded.

S. B., aged 20, was several times in prison, but has

become very anxious to reform ; and for six months has not committed a breach of the law.

Her parents are not well conducted ; but are willing to receive her. She is employed at needlework, and is thankful for visits and advice.

E. B., aged 33, a factory hand. She was a clever thief, but has been behaving honestly for some three years ; and during the time has been frequently conversed with by ladies who have been interested in her since her imprisonment.

A former criminal, who has been for some years going on respectably, is described in the following testimonial ; and such cases are the best arguments in favour of the moral effort of female ex-prisoners :—

“—— has filled the situation of head nurse in the —— County Hospital for nearly two years. She is about to leave, as she is looking for another appointment, I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to her capability as a nurse. She is kind, painstaking, and skilful, and I have always found her ready to carry out any instructions with diligence and care. The patients have repeatedly expressed to me their grateful sense of her kindness and attention to them.

“I am sure she will always use her best exertions to



discharge the duties of any situation, she may obtain, to the satisfaction of her employers."

The continued supervision of those who are endeavouring to maintain a moral position is a plan which is found to work most effectively. Several friends who, some years ago, formed a circle for the purpose, and keep it up by correspondence, find it a useful instrumentality, and believe it has been blessed to the finding of many "a cloak," although they do not know of its having been the means of bringing to any the great robe of everlasting righteousness. They do not restrict themselves to the temporal interests of their protégées; but they pursue the moral effort very ardently; and they endeavour to make its nature distinctly understood by those they address.

It is found that women, who have been for any length of time in prison, are generally made very familiar with Scripture, and become well acquainted with the doctrines of religion. When these have no vital influence on them, it is not unfrequently discovered that they mislead them, and occasion some very serious disadvantages. Criminals are generally proud, as may be assumed from their abuse of the I Will; and when they are addressed



continuously in words applicable only to the common assembly of Christians, from which they are separated for discipline and correction, they become puffed up into a dignity that does not belong to them.

A lady, who has many opportunities of conversing with some who have been years frequently coming under this teaching, finds that many of them insist that they are the subjects of Divine grace, whose ways do not testify that it reigns over their hearts. It is true that this delusion prevails in ordinary society occasionally too ; but it is peculiarly trying, to meet it in a place where such a blunder is more glaringly apparent, and more dangerous in its consequences. The painstaking care of the chaplains and teachers to be as accurate as possible in the letter of their teaching, seems of little avail against this very serious mischief.

It operates in the most powerful manner in repressing moral effort :—

“ You mean to do as well as you can, I hope, and not to drink or steal when you go out. Will you be a teetotaler ? ” was said to one, who, after her second term of imprisonment, was about to leave.

“ Yes ; there’s no fear of me now ; with God’s help

I can do anything. His grace is sufficient for me. As my day so shall my strength be. I'll make no promises, I don't want them. Nothing can upset me. I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

And this, while she was showing active opposition to the regulations under which she was being discharged; and strongly objecting to the supervision of the police, which she knew should occur on her being set at liberty!

It is very difficult to convey correct ideas to minds so distorted and perverted as those to be met in prison; and the amount of knowledge on spiritual concerns that they may attain, without the least real benefit, is perfectly surprising. This is not an argument against the use of such an acquisition; but it should lead to careful effort to guard against its abuse. Any means whereby a distinct and positive line can be drawn between religious conviction and moral reformation, is to be regarded as a valuable auxiliary to even the work of the evangelist.

A contrivance which has done some service will be detailed in the following chapter, and cannot fail to interest and engage sympathy.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *The Honesty Pledge.*

Impetus given by Temperance Movement..Teetotalism a Blessing  
..No Apologist Required..Disparities between Dishonesty and  
Intemperance..Serious Elements..Voluntary Honesty Pledge..  
Tenderness of Conscience..Application to Family Life..Adoption  
in Schools..Regular Institution in an Industrial School..No  
Experience Telling"..The Mettray Ring..Utility of a Token  
..Stimulating Publicity..Working-Men's Opinion..Bricklayer  
and Labourer..Special Meetings..Religious Movement..Con-  
verted Criminals' Association..Addresses to Specified Malefactors  
..Bracing the Young Mind..Rudimentary Method..Vows..  
Ancient Practice..Small Sense of Integrity..Upright Commer-  
cial Transactions..A Check in Time..M. C. and her Sister..  
J. S.'s Moral Difficulties..Capability of Ex-Criminals..Testi-  
mony to Honesty Pledge..Government Agency..Women's  
Need..Registration Desirable..Simple Machinery..Mr. Recorder  
Hill's Conclusion..The Sixth Work Blessed.

AMONG the early effects of the temperance movement, was the impetus which was given to the exhibition of self-restraint. This power had been sleeping in the matter of intoxicating drink, when it was startlingly aroused by the advocates of teetotalism; and was called into action by the simple act of administering the pledge.

The sin of drunkenness was attacked by the plain and

almost forgotten force of moral suasion, and a great inroad made upon its border.

Personal influence exerted itself greatly in this proceeding; and it is amply rewarded in the fruit of the enterprise. It is surprising how well and rapidly it acts in this case, bending as it will those who are not moved by the desire to please their Heavenly Father and Almighty Friend, but who can be induced to become temperate in order to secure advantages of infinitely smaller value, than the perfect salvation offered by His grace.

The appeal of the virtuous to drunkards is well-known to be very efficacious. It reforms many of those whom it addresses; and it checks the progress of the vice, not only by the conversion of individuals to sobriety, but by preventing numbers from falling into the transgression, and from entering on a career of habitual intoxication. This fact makes teetotalism a blessing to the community, and records its value in imperishable fame.

The benefit that accrues from bringing into active energy in our social connections, a power which exercises direct effort to remove special offences from us, is inestimable. It is a cleansing, purifying work, and deserves our heartiest co-operation. We must endeavour to drive off all

the evil that we can, however it is to be done; and where we cannot introduce the principle of holiness, we may prevail in establishing external morality.

The nature of the instrumentality used by teetotalers—the promise, solemnly made, signed and sworn, has been very much controverted. It is accused of endeavouring to displace the true motive to righteousness; and of threatening to substitute an artificial for a real reason for well-doing. But there is a practical demonstration given by the work accomplished, which fully answers all opponents. It is seen that the temperance pledge is no supplanter, but that it is a *bonâ fide* agency, engaged in a distinct undertaking of its own; and not interfering, in any way, with the labour of the Christian ministry, the preaching of which it supplements and enforces. Nor is it an unworthy *aide-de-camp*. It proves itself daily a great assistance in drawing together, and inducing many to come within reach of Gospel teaching, who, otherwise, would be inaccessible to its most searching efforts.

The scheme, now in full life and vigour, supported by its own vitality, requires no apologist. Its interesting suggestions produced an idea, which, some time ago,

originated the application of a similar course of action to another sort of offence; and an effort to enable persons prone to it to deal with their vicious inclinations in the same way that those whose besetting sin is intoxication are encouraged to do.

An attempt to use the pledge as an engine for the repression of other manifestations of crime, beside excessive drink, was made some years past; and its operation has borne the test of time.

There is some difficulty in adducing the facts which support this assertion; but general statements can be offered in evidence; and they will carry conviction with them. There are great disparities between the cases of intemperance and dishonesty; but enough similarity will be found to admit of their being treated in the same manner. It is not surprising that this is not commonly attempted, because of the peculiar risks attending the charge of theft. People cannot be spoken to about it as easily as about their habits of intemperance.

The protection of the law is strongly given to preserve the character of trustworthiness; and this defence, which is so useful to the good and virtuous, occasionally aids the criminal in his evil ways. But there is found a possibility of working so as not to excite the functions

of this enactment. Its guardian spirit can be respected, and its operation made increasingly beneficial, by a discreet interference with those whose title to the name it is intended to shield is fairly questionable.

Direct communication has sometimes been held, under peculiar circumstances, with those who show a tendency to disregard the rights of property; with delicacy and kindness, confidential intercourse on the subject of the betrayed weakness has been occasionally established. This intimacy has been found far more difficult to gain than the freest access to the mind and feeling of the drunkard, whose open transgression cannot be hidden; and the nature of whose offence does not necessarily involve the interests of any besides the guilty person. When there is no second party to an act, and that it is an offence against morality, which merely hurts the actor, there is little impediment to the discussion of it; but when there is a complication of interests and persons, serious elements are added to the matter.

Detection is an unpleasant circumstance to have to do with. Proof of guilt is, in itself, an intricate and tender item. We may have suspicions concerning dishonesty in individual cases, but on surmise and conjecture there can never be any action taken.



It happened that just at the time that "taking the pledge" against alcoholic liquor was in the height of its popularity, a case of flagrant dishonesty occurred in the family of a lady, very much interested in the temperance cause. The household was addressed on the subject of the crime that had been committed by one of its inmates; and the exhortation was closed with the words, "It is a pledge against theft, instead of drink, that is required in this house."

The culprit immediately came forward and offered to take the promise thus suggested. There was an engagement drawn up, in form like the "temperance pledge," and it was taken, *i.e.* sworn, in the most solemn manner by the offender, and by one other person who acknowledged a similar infirmity. Both these were domestic servants, and the check was found very effective in their case. For many years neither were again complained of; and when, after a long time, one committed an act of dishonesty—of so common a kind as to be seldom regarded in that light—she confessed it to her employer, and renewed the former vow with much apparent contrition.

The practice of treating such offences in this manner, in the household referred to, became confirmed; and it was



copied by others, until the rule came to be adopted by a circle of some extent.

A great many persons are now known to members of it to have taken THE HONESTY PLEDGE, and to have kept it, on the whole, tolerably. There have been breaches of it, and there have been struggles to preserve its sacred agreement intact. Some of these have become known to the friend who instituted the plan; and many more, doubtless, are, though concealed from her, open to the All-seeing Eye. In this respect, the contrivance has not been differently received in the case of stealing from that of drinking. In the latter there are frequently breaches of engagement, rendering a case of perfect total abstinence exceedingly rare; and, as might be expected, there must have been some failures on the Honesty Pledge; but they have not been many, and none have occurred rendering the offenders amenable to justice.

There has been a tenderness of conscience cultivated by means of it, which is excessively valuable. Though there were many difficulties in the way of making this scheme available for those who, under various circumstances, have been found to need the check, it has been

used by several who approved of it, on hearing the result of its application in family life.

In some schools it has been carried into effect.

In one large industrial school there was a regularly instituted Honesty Pledge ; and the benefit it rendered to the pupils, and to the community, of which they are now members, cannot be calculated. Many a juvenile delinquent was brought to a critical point in a vicious course, by being detected in theft, taught the nature of the act of crime committed, warned of its consequences, instructed concerning the advantage of the moral effort to overcome temptation, and influenced to take the "pledge," as a powerful help in so doing.

It was done in several instances with effects that are discernible in the life of the promisers. They have not had the aid of association. Fellow-abstainers from stealing, cannot assemble and band themselves, as the teetotalers do, nor can they have the excitement of hearing those "experiences" which, "as iron sharpeneth iron," benefits the members of temperance societies.

The Honesty Pledge, as we practised it, was without these accessories ; there was no system of connection between those who were pledged. The agreement was

made formally in presence of only one person, and no account of the transaction was ever given to the school, nor even to those who themselves entered into it was it told, who the others were that had enrolled in the pledge list; so that they had no means of recognising each other except by voluntary confession, and this they were sometimes found to make.

In consequence of what has since transpired in connection with this mode of action, it is regretted that some token or badge was not given like the *gage* bestowed on the *colons* at Mettray, who wore a ring, which is a sign of fraternity and alliance in maintaining morality.

In an account of the Mettray Reformatory, given by Miss Florence Hill, at the Social Science Congress in Dublin, in the year 1861, honourable mention is made of the symbol of membership of *L'Association de la Colonie de Mettray*, which is a ring:

Inscribed within the hoop are the honoured names of De Metz and Bretignères de Courteilles—the founders of the association—on either side of the words, *Dieu, Honneur, Souvenir, Alliance*, signifying devotion to the will of God, and brotherly union among the members for mutual support, and for the succour of the unfortunate, and reclamation of evil-doers. On the exterior is the legend, “*Loyauté passe toute,*” and two *relievi*, one representing a prison, before which

crouches a youth, sunk in despair; the other displaying the neat dwellings at Mettray, and a kneeling child, his eyes raised in gratitude to Heaven. An anecdote illustrating the spirit which animates the wearers of the ring, I may briefly relate. An artisan, having accomplished some work he had undertaken, and received payment, met a friend with whom he repaired to a public-house, where he soon became exceedingly tipsy. Starting on his way homewards along the bank of the river Marne, singing and dancing under the influence of drink, he ran against a young man who was walking rapidly in the opposite direction. The shock jerked off the cap of the drunken man, and it rolled into the river. He forthwith fell upon the innocent cause of the mishap, and pummelled him might and main. The other, perceiving he had to deal with an antagonist who had taken leave of his senses, parried the strokes as well as he could, preferring even to receive some hard blows rather than to hurt an opponent who was not master of himself. Other persons coming up put an end to the combat, and the stranger was peaceably pursuing his road when cries of "Help! help!" brought him back with all speed to the spot. The drunken artisan, in his efforts to regain his cap, had fallen into the water, and was struggling for life. None of the bystanders could swim. In a moment the young man had plunged, dressed as he was, into the river, and, after twice diving, had caught hold of the other, and deposited him safe and sound upon the bank. When the rest present had paid needful attention to the rescued man, quite sobered by his dip, all turned to thank and congratulate his generous preserver. He had departed, and was already out of sight, but upon the ground lay a ring which he must

have dropped. It was recognised as the ring of the "Association de Mettray."

In adopting the same course again, from the experience we have gained, and justified by the precedent of Mettray, we should make use of some indication besides a written paper, likely to be destroyed, and should more closely imitate the original "pledge," and have a medal, or some such token of the act and deed; and, moreover, we are now disposed to promote association as helpful and pleasant to the holders of it. Formerly, we believe that it would have deprived the proceeding of its sanctity to have broken its privacy, or to have made any communication between the parties holding the Honesty Pledge; but latterly we have seen instances of voluntary association for the purpose of affording the countenance and support of sympathy, and with undoubted good results.

The stimulating publicity of the labours of teetotalism keeps up the excitement of the workers, and forms no small element of its success. This is, of course, wholly inadmissible in the matter of the Honesty Pledge, but a movement not like it exactly in fact, but parallel in effect, might be managed.

A short time ago, we were taught how this could be arranged. Some working men, who assemble for a religious purpose, were spoken to on the subject of taking promises against acts of crime, and they were unanimously in favour of it. It appeared that it was not by any means a novel proceeding to them. They were in the habit of practising it, and had never questioned its legitimacy nor utility. Having been accustomed to the Temperance Pledge, and recognising its advantages, they had already perceived its applicability to cases of common theft; and had been in the habit, at their own suggestion, of practising it. They had made it a rule to oblige all their labourers, who were known to be dishonest, to pledge themselves to refrain from stealing.

As they have much contact with the criminal section of society, and considerable intermixture with it, there was much pleasure in hearing that this was the form in which they employed moral suasion.

A master bricklayer stated that he frequently required his labourers to take a pledge against stealing, and in reply to the inquiry, "Do they keep it?" he answered, "As often as not; but I don't mind that, I go on again, and make them repeat it whenever they break it ;

unless they are very bad indeed, and do something very heavy, then I have to give them up to the law, for it is a sign that there is no good at all in them. If they intend to do well I soon find it out, and help them along; and the promise is a great thing. Some time ago I was only temperate myself off and on, breaking my word at least three or four times a-year. Now, some of these poor fellows will keep on a couple of years or more, though I watch them, and would be sure to find them out if they did anything of the sort. One time I was eating my breakfast, and had left my tools at the other side of the wall, when I heard some one meddling with them. I looked over, and found that it was one of the labourers who had taken a large trowel, and was making off with it. I ran after him and stopped him.

“ ‘What are you going to do with that?’ I said. ‘I can’t spare it to you,’ and I spoke quietly, so as not to frighten him. The poor chap didn’t sham long.

“ ‘Here, take it back,’ said he, ‘I was going to try to get a few pence for it.’

“ ‘I’ll give you the few pence said I, on one condition.’

“ ‘And what is that?’ said he.

“ ‘That you come back,’ said I, ‘and take your oath,



down on your knees, that you won't thieve again from me, nor from any other person.'

" 'I will that,' said he, 'for I want something on my mind to stop me when the thought comes over me;' and he did swear every word that I dictated to him, and my belief is that it helped to keep him honest for a long time. I reminded him of it once or twice, and we kept firm friends. I am sure he knew that I wanted to serve him, and I believe there was no harm done, and some little good."

This man, who had evidently given much thought to the subject, was then asked, if he thought that there would be any use in trying to collect such persons into special meetings, and addressing them on the subject of their peculiar temptation. It was his opinion, that it might be attempted, and a meeting was accordingly held, at which eleven persons attended; avowedly holders of an Honesty Pledge, but they held a much higher qualification, for each of the little group were influenced by religious feelings; and, therefore, the character of the meeting was different from the assembling of ordinary members of a common honesty society.

The fact that a religious movement resulted from the



moral effort, which, in this case, it veritably did, is significant of the benefit of introducing reformatory action in any shape. It is now ascertained, by experiment, that criminal people do not object to being gathered together, and addressed as such.

A great organization is in operation in South London, which, in undertaking to promote spiritual conversion, classifies criminals, and directs its teaching to them under the specific names of their crimes. It holds meetings for different characters at separate times ; thieves on one occasion, and other sorts of offenders in their turn. The results of this work are such as to encourage efforts to attack, specifically, the various forms of transgression under its peculiar heading. It is certain, that a great many of the very worst of malefactors, have become pious under this influence, and that a larger number still of them are morally affected. The conductors of this scheme do not seem to doubt their power to produce even greater effects than have yet appeared ; and they are anxious to extend their movement, and to have access to criminals under all circumstances, both in and out of prison.

In the management and training of little children, we

all resort, as if by instinct, to the plan of entering into special engagements to oppose certain tendencies to do wrong.

No one questions the beneficial effect of making little ones promise obedience to our commands.

Willy pledges his word not to turn the water-tap: Bessie engages not to go near the fire-place; and Janie agrees to avoid the stairs, the pond, and all other dangerous localities.

There is a deep moral principle involved in this; and we use it fearlessly. Sometimes we go a long way, and turn the force of the little one's word against itself. "You must promise to tell the truth," is not an uncommon mode of bracing the young mind against falsehood.

The familiarity of this action deprives us of the respect with which we should regard it. Nevertheless, it is a movement of great importance, identical with the principle which developes itself in the Honesty Pledge, as a more advanced proceeding of the same scheme. The method belongs to a rudimentary state of society, and its application should, therefore, be confined to the section of the community which approximates to that condition.

The vow is a Divine institution ; and was ordained for the aid of those who, in the early times of human history, were called to become the “peculiar people.” They had many and great disabilities in carrying out the precepts of the moral law ; and, for their benefit, under circumstances of trial which they showed themselves unable to sustain, vows were invested with honour and dignity, by all the pomp and ceremonials of a form of worship, in which moral impression and sensation were cultivated to the highest degree.

Ancient practice thus sanctions the Honesty Pledge for minds ungoverned by the higher constraint of holiness, and untutored in the requirements of faith. For pious and spiritually influenced persons they are needless ; and any such binding themselves in this way is inconsistent with their position, and with the proper nature of the act.

There are frequently found, however, in the better taught estates of life, instances of persons to whom the restraint of a promise seems useful. They are ill able to summon their force against self-indulgence ; and require the power, which it gives, of centralizing their efforts.

This is often observed with regard to the Temperance Pledge, which is adopted in cases where common conviction fails to subdue the inveterate habit of drink; and it is possible that some who find themselves weak on the point of honesty, might be led to strengthen their morality by the same means.

There are habits and doings—very common acts, indeed—which do not bear the test of strict investigation, in which members of even the higher orders of society transgress, almost unconsciously. The sense of integrity is not keen in some, whose circumstances in life ought to have secured better training. We do not well see how the Honesty Pledge can reach them. The management of such a scheme as would reach these offenders would be impracticable. They are outside our province; and we can only deplore their lack of conscientiousness. But it does occur, occasionally, that persons are encountered in commercial dealings whose transactions are not thoroughly upright. Here something may be done, that may spare much evil to the individual and to the community.

There have been interesting instances of this, in connection with our Honesty Pledge; a few of which we

will give, collecting them from among many others, of which they are very fair specimens.

A lady made some purchases in a large shop, and paid for them. When she was about to leave the counter, she was surprised by the question :—

“ Shall the goods be accompanied by the bill ? ”

“ I have paid for them,” she replied.

“ Pardon me, madam,” said the salesman, “ there is some mistake ; I have not received the money.”

The lady stood, and calmly fixing her eyes on his countenance, solemnly and slowly put the question to him :

“ Are you an honest man ? ”

His face flushed, and conscience-stricken, he stammered some incoherent answer. His interrogator walked away without adding a word ; and no further application was made to her for the money.

In a few days, she went again to the shop, and confronted her convict. He could not meet her gaze, and she perceived that he was endeavouring to escape her. With as kind and encouraging a manner as she could assume, she intercepted him ; and addressed him directly with reference to the late transaction. She proposed that he should

take the Honesty Pledge, and he agreed to do so. An appointment was made for the purpose. It was kept. The engagement was seriously written and signed; the man's hand trembled as he took the pen:

"This may be the salvation of me," he ejaculated, "I was beginning to go a bad road."

His account of himself, then freely given, was most interesting. He was commencing a course of systematic fraud; and this was the first instance of detection. The affair affected him deeply, and proved a thorough check. He has now, for several years, maintained not only a good character, but a good conscience; and asserts that he has not once since transgressed in the same way; but has kept his promise to be just and true in his dealings with his employer, and with the customers. There is corroborative evidence in the fact that he is still in the same warehouse, and that he retains a firm friendship for the person before whom he entered into the undertaking.

M. C., a young woman, now a cashier in a shop, was, ten years ago, convicted by a former employer of a very serious fraud. She was directly remonstrated with; and her father, a man occupying a situation of trust with

much respectability, was sent for. In his presence, the girl, with great solemnity, made a promise to endeavour to overcome her temptation to steal. She was closely watched for more than two years, without being detected in any further offence; and she then changed her employment for the one in which she is at present engaged. She has, up to this time, proved herself trustworthy in transacting money business. Meantime, the friend who induced her to make this moral effort, has had frequent conversations with her; and has received repeated assurances of the valuable effect of the Honesty Pledge over her inward consciousness. M. C. has no symptom of piety; she has an amiable disposition, and many good qualities, which, if she had pursued the criminal career, the probability is she would, by this time, have lost; for they would have been dispersed by the measures she would have taken, to maintain her war with society.

A sister of this girl's, at a very early age, began to show symptoms of a similar inclination; and M. C. brought her to the lady from whom she had taken the pledge, with a request that the same sort of promise, that had proved so useful to her, might be administered to her



sister. It was done, and there has been as beneficial a result as in the case of the elder girl. These sisters recall with deep gratitude the transaction that nerved them to resist theft; and willingly give their testimony, when called on to do so, to the good of the Honesty Pledge.

Another instance, of a different kind, which occurred about sixteen years ago, illustrates its effect as a security for uprightness, and the utility of having a clear understanding on the subject of a man's moral difficulties.

A ship was wrecked on the south coast one very severe winter. The lives of all on board were saved, but many lost their whole property in the waves. J. S., one of the latter, was a man, who, with his wife and three children, was proceeding to Australia, when their voyage was thus brought to a disastrous end. The residents on the shore where it occurred, were anxious to help the sufferers from the wreck; and this man, among others, was asked by a gentleman what aid his circumstances required. His reply was, that his case had a peculiar difficulty, for that he was emigrating in order to recover, in the Colonies, a character for honesty, which he acknowledged that he had justly forfeited.

He stated, that he had recently undergone two years'



imprisonment, for fraudulently appropriating the money of his employer, a London warehouseman. The man solemnly averred that he had only committed one act of crime; and he declared that it was his determination to remain moral, and to avoid in future similar transgression.

His auditor, favourably impressed by his evident sincerity, willingly agreed to receive his promise to that effect, and then found him employment. During ten years he conducted himself meritoriously in the work in which he was placed; and the work itself which was of a character not usually intrusted in such hands, adds to the interest of the case.

A ragged school for boys of the "dangerous" class was being established in the neighbourhood; and the anxiety which the ex-prisoner exhibited, to be allowed to help these little ones; and the knowledge which he seemed to have of how to do it, suggested the idea of giving him employment in connection with it.

The experiment appeared to be a serious hazard; but the result was most successful; and the case has been used as a precedent, on more than one occasion, for the engagement of reformed persons in the work of restraining

others from vice. Four similar instances are known, in which ex-criminals have acted with extraordinary power in the reforming of others ; and facts appear to justify the conclusion, that there is some capability in them for such labour, not yet sufficiently appreciated.

The ragged school referred to prospered under the management of J. S. He remained in connection with it until the growing wants of his family required a further effort for their advancement, when, to the great regret of its promoters, he withdrew from it to engage in a more lucrative business.

The Honesty Pledge was an engine, the power of which he extensively tested. He and others give its practice their unqualified support. Some prison officers concur in this testimony ; and cases might be gathered from their experience, of the utility of fortifying by this means, the good resolutions of those who desire to become moral.

A short time ago, a young woman, in one of the London prisons, was found willing to enter into an agreement, not to repeat her offence—a common larceny. She was most grateful to hear, that, on her discharge from prison, and on her return to her distant home, a lady,

who had been told of her determination, would visit her ; and would endeavour to support her in her resolution. She was made fully aware that no pecuniary help would be afforded her, that it was only moral superintendence that would be given ; and that it would only secondarily affect her prospects of employment. This did not deter her ; and she insisted on pledging herself. There were no religious sentiments in her case. She had frequently ridiculed the idea of pretending to be pious ; and had never attempted to deceive those who applied themselves to the spiritual instruction of the prisoners, by affecting to accept their counsel, and to reciprocate their feelings. She was consequently regarded as hardened and hopeless ; and as having little promise beside a speedy return to the prison walls. As yet, she has not done so ; but it is too soon to say anything further regarding her case.

It is, by no means, a light testimony to be able to add that criminals themselves, express an approval of this method of aiding them ; and are rather more anxious to avail themselves of it than seems advisable to many who are willing to befriend them. Their continual breaches of their promises weary and disgust their

most ardent assistants; but, whenever a victory is achieved by any of these poor people, they do not hesitate to acknowledge the value of this instrumentality.

Women, who have been in prison, and whose cases have been introduced to benevolent ladies, manifest so much thankfulness for the oversight granted them, that it cannot be otherwise than a benefit to them, that the Government supplies an agency for the purpose of affording them help and protection, which is analogous in its nature to the Honesty Pledge.

In the special case of women, however, we believe that the help of benevolent female interference is the most valuable aid that can be given.

The new arrangement, by which all licensed convicts are supervised by the police, cannot be of close application to women. It is not co-extensive with their need, for the bulk of those who are discharged from prisons are not holders of tickets-of-leave; nor can it possibly have the same influence as the effort of their own sex on their behalf.

The plan, which is, at length, established by the State, is one which forms part of the working of

all our charitable societies for the aid of prisoners. Under some heading or other, it appears in all their reports; and it is to be desired that a system of registration may, in time, be adopted that will centralize the effort, and enable it to show its results.

The issue of the Honesty Pledge in some systematic manner would secure this; and give datum on which to found statements of the progress of attempts to restore criminals to moral living.

Temperance societies, by a very simple machinery, manage to accomplish all that would be needful to render the honesty movement tangible. It would not be impossible to circulate a little formal "pledge" among those who are under guardianship; and the reserved duplicate would furnish all the needful information, without violating the secrecy of the transaction.

It was, for a long time, objected that the police supervision of convicts, to which we have alluded, would encounter popular opposition; but the contrary is proved to be the fact. It is working, so far as it has been tried, satisfactorily. Mr. Recorder Hill, in his address to the Birmingham Borough Sessions' Jury, July 5th, 1865, sums up a very interesting collection of reports, which

he made connected with this matter, in the emphatic words, that:—

For the first time in the history of English jurisprudence, an alliance has been established between the officers of justice and discharged criminals, to operate for the benefit of all—of the class dismissed and set at large, of the officers, and of the whole nation—an alliance which, while it is hardly within the limits of possibility that it should be perverted to evil, must present strong motives and excellent opportunities for good.

Signal marks and tokens show that every labour which has for its object the suppression of crime, is blessed by God; and to those who are willing to be instruments in this Sixth Work of Christian service, we commend the use of “The Honesty Pledge,” as one of the most efficacious means of promoting the desired end.

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